This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

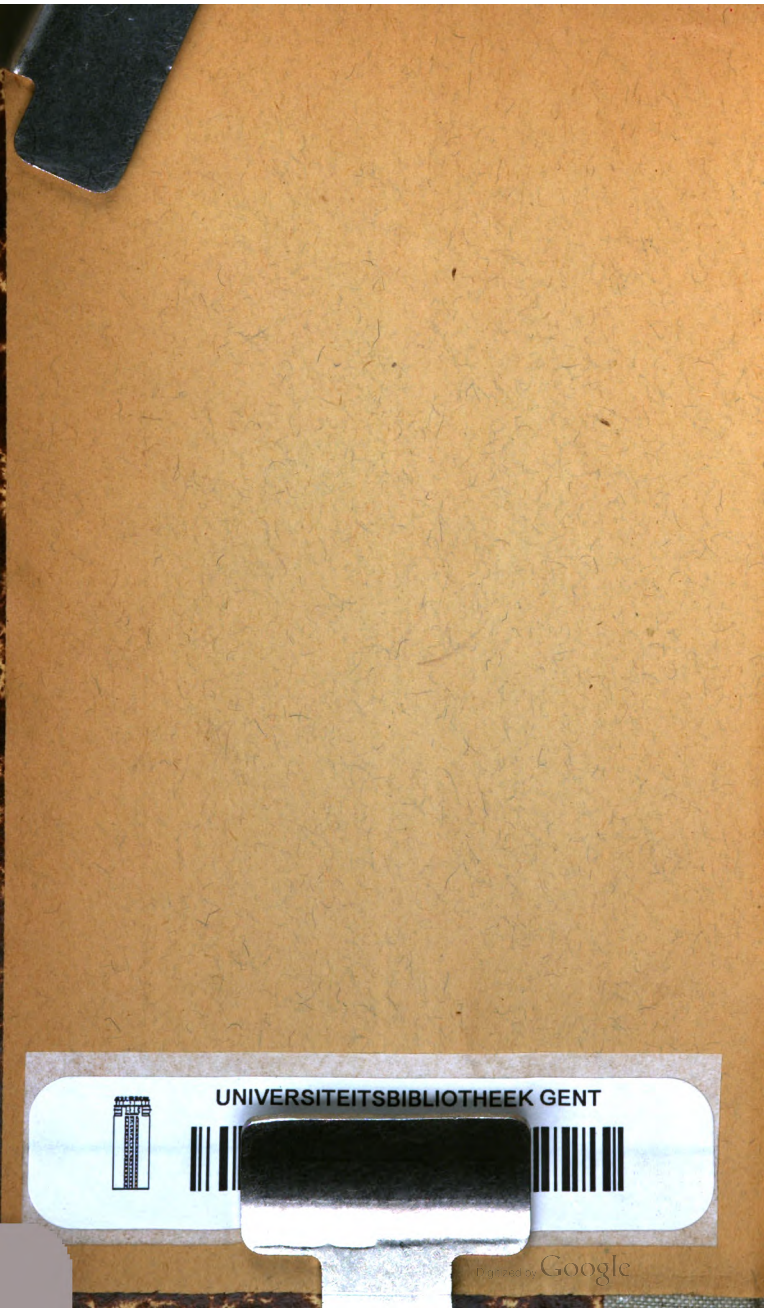
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


UNIVERSITEITSBIBLIOTHEEK GENT

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.

by David Hume.

Paris.

Published

by Parsons and Galignani.

1806.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

HUME's ESSAYS.

Phil 506.1

ESSAY I.

ON COMMERCE.

THE greater part of mankind may be divided into two classes; that of *shallow* thinkers, who fall short of the truth, and that of *abstruse* thinkers, who go beyond it. The latter class are by far the most rare; and, I may add, by far the most useful and valuable. They suggest hints, at least, and start difficulties, which they want, perhaps, skill to pursue; but which may produce fine discoveries, when handled by men who have a more just way of thinking. At worst, what they say is uncommon; and if it should cost some pains to comprehend it, one has, however, the pleasure of hearing something that is new. An author is little to be valued, who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee-house conversation.

All people of *shallow* thought are apt to decry even those of *solid* understanding, as *abstruse* thinkers, and metaphysicians, and refiners; and never will allow any thing to be just which is beyond their own weak conceptions. There are some cases, I own, where an extraordinary refinement affords a strong presumption of falsehood, and where no reasoning is to be trusted but what is natural and easy. When

Digitized by Google

a man deliberates concerning his conduct
particular affair, and forms schemes in politic
œconomy, or any business in life, he neve
to draw his arguments too fine, or connect t
a chain of consequences together. Some
sure to happen that will disconcert his rea
and produce an event different from what
pected. But when we reason upon *general* s
one may justly affirm that our speculatio
scarcely ever be too fine, provided they
and that the difference between a commo
and a man of genius, is chiefly seen in th
lowness or depth of the principles upon whi
proceed. General reasonings seem intricat
rely because they are general; nor is it easy
bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great
of particulars, that common circumstance in
they all agree, or to extract it, pure and un
from the other superfluous circumstances.
judgment or conclusion, with them, is par
They cannot enlarge their view to those un
propositions, which comprehend under them
finite number of individuals, and include a
science in a single theorem. Their eye is confo
with such an extensive prospect; and the c
sions, derived from it, even though clearly exp
seem intricate and obscure. But however in
they may seem, it is certain that general prin
if just and sound, must always prevail in the g
course of things, though they may fail in par
cases; and it is the chief business of philosop
regard the general course of things. I ma

Digitized by Google

that it is also the chief business of politicians; especially in the domestic government of the state, where the public good, which is, or ought to be, their object, depends on the concurrence of a multitude of causes, not, as in foreign politics, on accidents and chances, and the caprices of a few persons. This therefore makes the difference between *particular* deliberations and *general* reasonings, and renders subtility and refinement much more suitable to the latter than to the former.

I thought this introduction necessary before the following discourses on *commerce, money, interest, balance of trade, &c.* where, perhaps, there will occur some principles which are uncommon, and which may seem too refined and subtile for such vulgar subjects. If false, let them be rejected: but no one ought to entertain a prejudice against them, merely because they are out of the common road.

The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear thinking, that it may possibly admit of exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce and riches and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength

Digitized by Google

to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish its authority among the neighbouring nations. Man is a very variable being, and susceptible of many different opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true, while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.

The bulk of every state may be divided into *husbandmen* and *manufacturers*. The former are employed in the culture of the land; the latter work up the materials furnished by the former into all the commodities which are necessary or ornamental to human life. As soon as men quit their savage state, where they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, they must fall into these two classes; though the arts of agriculture employ *at first* the most numerous part of the society. [1] Time and experience improve so much these arts, that the land may easily maintain a much greater number of men than those who are immediately employed in its culture, or who furnish the more necessary manufactures to such as are so employed.

[1] Mons. Melon, in his political essay on commerce, asserts that even at present, if you divide France into 20 parts, 16 are labourers or peasants, two only artisans; one belonging to the law, church, and military; and one marchands, financiers, and bourgeois. This calculation is certainly very erroneous. In France, England, and indeed most parts of Europe, half of the inhabitants live in cities; and even of those who live in the country, a great number are artisans, perhaps above a third.

Digitized by Google

If these superfluous hands apply themselves to the finer arts, which are commonly denominated the arts of *luxury*, they add to the happiness of the state, since they afford to many the opportunity of receiving enjoyments, with which they would otherwise have been unacquainted. But may not another scheme be proposed for the employment of these superfluous hands! May not the sovereign lay claim to them, and employ them in fleets and armies to increase the dominions of the state abroad, and spread its fame over distant nations! It is certain that the fewer the desires and wants that are found in the proprietors and labourers of land, the fewer hands do they employ; and consequently the superfluities of the land, instead of maintaining tradesmen and manufacturers, may support fleets and armies to a much greater extent than where a great many arts are required to minister to the luxury of particular persons. Here therefore seems to be a kind of opposition between the greatness of the state and the happiness of the subject. A state is never greater than when all its superfluous hands are employed in the service of the public. The ease and convenience of private persons require that these hands should be employed in their service. The one can never be satisfied but at the expense of the other. As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench on the luxury of individuals, so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force, and check the ambition, of the sovereign.

Nor is this reasoning merely chimerical; but is founded on history and experience. The republic

of Sparta was certainly more powerful tha
state now in the world, consisting of an
number of people; and this was owing enti
the want of commerce and luxury. The H
were the labourers: the Spartans were the s
or gentlemen. It is evident, that the labour
Helotes could not have maintained so great
ber of Spartans, had these latter lived in ea
delicacy, and given employment to a great
of trades and manufactures. The like polic
be remarked in Rome. And, indeed, throu
all ancient history, it is observable, that the s
republics raised and maintained greater armi
states, consisting of triple the number of inhab
are able to support at present. It is compute
in all European nations, the proportion be
soldiers and people does not exceed one to
dred. But we read that the city of Rome
with its small territory, raised and maintai
early times, ten legions against the Latins. A
the whole of whose dominions was not large
Yorkshire, sent to the expedition against Sici
forty thousand men [1]. Dionysius the elde
said, maintained a standing army of a hu
thousand foot and ten thousand horse, bes
large fleet of four hundred sail [2], though his
tories extended no farther than the city of Sy

[1] THUCYDIDES, *lib. VII.*

[2] DIOD. SIC. *lib. VII.* This account, I own, is sor
suspicious, not to say worse; chiefly because thi
was not composed of citizens, but of mercenary f

Digitized by Google

about a third of the island of Sicily, and some sea-port towns and garrisons on the coast of Italy and Illyricum. It is true, the ancient armies, in time of war, subsisted much upon plunder: but did not the enemy plunder in their turn! which was a more ruinous way of levying a tax than any other that could be devised. In short, no probable reason can be assigned for the great power of the more ancient states above the modern, but their want of commerce and luxury. Few artisans were maintained by the labour of the farmers, and therefore more soldiers might live upon it. Livy says that Rome, in his time, would find it difficult to raise as large an army as that which, in her early days, she sent out against the Gauls and Latins[1]. Instead of those soldiers who fought for liberty and empire in Camillus's time, there were, in Augustus's days, musicians, painters, cooks, players, and tailors; and if the land was equally cultivated at both periods, it could certainly maintain equal numbers in the one profession as in the other. They added nothing to the mere necessaries of life in the latter period more than in the former.

It is natural on this occasion to ask, whether sovereigns may not return to the maxims of ancient policy, and consult their own interest in this respect, more than the happiness of their subjects! I answer, that it appears to me almost impossible; and that because ancient policy was violent, and contrary to

[1] TIT. LIV., *lib. VII, cap. 24.* "Adeò in quæ laboramus," says he, "sola crevimus, divitias luxuriamque."

Digitized by Google

the more natural and usual course of things.
well known with what peculiar laws Sparta
governed, and what a prodigy that republic is
esteemed by every one, who has considered h
nature, as it has displayed itself in other na
and other ages. Were the testimony of h
less positive and circumstantial, such a govern
would appear a mere philosophical whim or fi
and impossible ever to be reduced to practice.
though the Roman and other ancient repu
were supported on principles somewhat more
ral, yet was there an extraordinary concurren
circumstances to make them submit to such
vous burdens. They were free states; they
small ones; and the age being martial, all
neighbours were continually in arms. Fre
naturally begets public spirit, especially in
states; and this public spirit, this *amor patriæ*,
increase when the public is almost in cont
alarm, and men are obliged, every momen
expose themselves to the greatest dangers f
defence. A continual succession of wars r
every citizen a soldier: he takes the field i
turn, and during his service he is chiefly n
tained by himself. This service is indeed eq
lent to a heavy tax; yet is it less felt by a p
addicted to arms, who fight for honour and rev
more than pay, and are unacquainted with
and industry as well as pleasure [r]. Not to me

[r] The more ancient Romans lived in perpetua
with all their neighbours; and in old Latin, the

Digitized by Google

the great equality of fortunes among the inhabitants of the ancient republics, where every field, belonging to a different proprietor, was able to maintain a family, and rendered the numbers of citizens very considerable, even without trade and manufactures.

But though the want of trade and manufactures, among a free and very martial people, may *sometimes* have no other effect than to render the public more powerful, it is certain, that, in the common course of human affairs, it will have a quite contrary tendency. Sovereigns must take mankind as they find them, and cannot pretend to introduce any violent change in their principles and ways of

hostis, expressed both a stranger and an enemy. This is remarked by Cicero; but by him is ascribed to the humanity of his ancestors, who softened, as much as possible, the denomination of an enemy, by calling him by the same appellation which signified a stranger. *De Off.* lib. II. It is however much more probable, from the manners of the times, that the ferocity of those people was so great as to make them regard all strangers as enemies, and call them by the same name. It is not, besides, consistent with the most common maxims of policy or of nature, that any state should regard its public enemies with a friendly eye, or preserve such sentiments for them as the Roman orator would ascribe to his ancestors. Not to mention that the early Romans really exercised piracy, as we learn from their first treaties with Carthage, preserved by Polybius, lib. III, and consequently, like the Salee and Algerine rovers, were actually at war with most nations, and a stranger and an enemy were with them almost synonymous.

Digitized by Google

thinking. A long course of time, with a variet
accidents and circumstances, are requisite to
duce those great revolutions which so much di
sify the face of human affairs. And the less nat
any set of principles are, which support a partic
society, the more difficulty will a legislator
with in raising and cultivating them. It is his
policy to comply with the common bent of m
kind, and give it all the improvements of whic
is susceptible. Now, according to the most nat
course of things, industry, and arts, and tr
increase the power of the sovereign as well as
happiness of the subjects; and that policy is vio
which aggrandizes the public by the poverty o
dividuals. This will easily appear from a few co
derations, which will present to us the consequer
of sloth and barbarity.

Where manufactures and mechanic arts are
cultivated, the bulk of the people must apply th
selves to agriculture; and if their skill and indu
increase, there must arise a great superfluity f
their labour, beyond what suffices to maintain th
They have no temptation, therefore, to incr
their skill and industry; since they cannot excha
that superfluity for any commodities, which
serve either to their pleasure or vanity. A h
of indolence naturally prevails. The greater
of the land lies uncultivated. What is cultiva
yields not its utmost for want of skill and assidu
in the farmers. If at any time the public exigen
require that great numbers should be employed
the public service, the labour of the people furnis

Digitized by Google

now no superfluities by which these numbers can be maintained. The labourers cannot increase their skill and industry on a sudden. Lands uncultivated cannot be brought into tillage for some years. The armies, mean while, must either make sudden and violent conquests, or disband for want of subsistence. A regular attack or defence, therefore, is not to be expected from such a people, and their soldiers must be as ignorant and unskilful as their farmers and manufacturers.

Every thing in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions are the only causes of labour. When a nation abounds in manufactures and mechanic arts, the proprietors of land, as well as the farmers, study agriculture as a science, and redouble their industry and attention. The superfluity, which arises from their labour, is not lost, but is exchanged with manufactures for those commodities which men's luxury now makes them covet. By this means land furnishes a great deal more of the necessaries of life than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, this superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufactures, and the improvers of liberal arts. But it is easy for the public to convert many of these manufacturers into soldiers, and maintain them by that superfluity which arises from the labour of the farmers. Accordingly, we find that this is the case in all civilized governments. When the sovereign raises an army, what is the consequence? He imposes a tax. This tax obliges all the people to retrench what is least necessary to

Digitized by Google

their subsistance. Those who labour in such commodities must either enlist in the troops, or turn themselves to agriculture, and thereby oblige some labourers to enlist for want of business. And to consider the matter abstractedly, manufactures increase the power of the state only as they store up so much labour, and that of a kind to which the public may lay claim, without depriving any one of the necessaries of life. The more labour, therefore, is employed beyond mere necessaries, the more powerful is any state; since the persons engaged in that labour may easily be converted to the public service. In a state without manufactures there may be the same number of hands; but there is not the same quantity of labour, nor of the same kind. All the labour is there bestowed upon necessaries which can admit of little or no abatement.

Thus the greatness of the sovereign and the happiness of the state are, in a great measure, united with regard to trade and manufactures. It is a violent method, and in most cases impracticable, to oblige the labourer to toil, in order to raise from the land more than what subsists himself and family. Furnish him with manufactures and commodities, and he will do it of himself. Afterwards you will find it easy to seize some part of his superfluous labour, and employ it in the public service, without giving him his wonted return. Being accustomed to industry, he will think this less grievous than if, at once, you obliged him to an augmentation of labour without any reward.

Digitized by Google

The case is the same with regard to the other members of the state. The greater is the stock of labour of all kinds, the greater quantity may be taken from the heap without making any sensible alteration in it.

A public granary of corn, a storehouse of cloth, a magazine of arms, all these must be allowed real riches and strength in any state. Trade and industry are really nothing but a stock of labour, which, in times of peace and tranquillity, is employed for the ease and satisfaction of individuals; but, in the exigencies of the state, may, in part, be turned to public advantage. Could we convert a city into a kind of fortified camp, and infuse into each breast so martial a genius, and such a passion for public good, as to make every one willing to undergo the greatest hardships for the sake of the public; these affections might now, as in ancient times, prove alone a sufficient spur to industry, and support the community. It would then be advantageous, as in camps, to banish all arts and luxury; and, by restrictions on equipage and tables, make the provisions and forage last longer than if the army were loaded with a number of superfluous retainers. But as these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support, it is requisite to govern men by other passions, and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury. The camp is, in this case, loaded with a superfluous retinue, but the provisions flow in proportionably larger. The harmony of the whole is still supported; and the natural

Digitized by Google

bent of the mind being more complied with, individuals, as well as the public, find their account in the observance of those maxims.

The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of *foreign* commerce, in augmenting the power of the state as well as the riches and happiness of the subject. It increases the stock of labour in the nation; and the sovereign may convert what share of it he finds necessary to the service of the public. Foreign trade, by its imports, furnishes materials for new manufactures, and, by its exports, it produces labour in particular commodities which could not be consumed at home. In short, a kingdom, that has a large import and export, must abound more with industry, and that employed upon delicacies and luxuries, than a kingdom which rests contented with its native commodities. It is, therefore, more powerful, as well as richer and happier. The individuals reap the benefit of these commodities so far as they gratify the senses and appetites; and the public is also a gainer, while a greater stock of labour is, by this means, stored up against any public exigency: that is, a greater number of laborious men are maintained, who may be diverted to the public service, without robbing any one of the necessaries, or even the chief conveniencies of life.

If we consult history, we shall find that, in most nations, foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury. The temptation is stronger to make use

Digitized by Google

of foreign commodities, which are ready for use, and which are entirely new to us, than to make improvements on any domestic commodity, which always advance by slow degrees, and never affect us by their novelty. The profit is also very great in exporting what is superfluous at home, and what bears no price, to foreign nations, whose soil or climate is not favourable to that commodity. Thus men become acquainted with the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce; and their *delicacy* and *industry*, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade. And this perhaps is the chief advantage which arises from a commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence; and presenting the gayer and more opulent part of the nation with objects of luxury, which they never before dreamed of, raises in them a desire of a more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed. And at the same time, the few merchants, who possess the secret of this importation and exportation, make great profits; and, becoming rivals in wealth to the ancient nobility, tempt other adventurers to become their rivals in commerce. Imitation soon diffuses all those arts; while domestic manufactures emulate the foreign in their improvements, and work up every home commodity to the utmost perfection of which it is susceptible. Their own steel and iron, in such laborious hands, become equal to the gold and rubies of the Indies.

When the affairs of the society are once brought

Digitized by Google

to this situation, a nation may lose most of its foreign trade, and yet continue a great and powerful people. If strangers will not take any particular commodity of ours, we must cease to labour in it. The same hands will turn themselves towards some refinement in other commodities which may be wanted at home. And there must always be materials for them to work upon, till every person in the state, who possesses riches, enjoys as great plenty of home commodities, and those in as great perfection as he desires; which can never possibly happen. China is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world, though it has very little commerce beyond its own territories.

It will not, I hope, be considered as a superfluous digression, if I here observe, that, as the multitude of mechanical arts is advantageous, so is the great number of persons to whose share the productions of these arts fall. A too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniencies of life. No one can doubt, but such an equality is most suitable to human nature, and diminishes much less from the *happiness* of the rich, than it adds to that of the poor. It also augments the *power of the state,* and makes any extraordinary taxes or impositions be paid with more cheerfulness. Where the riches are engrossed by a few, these must contribute very largely to the supplying of the public necessities; but when the riches are dispersed

Digitized by Google

among multitudes, the burden feels light on every shoulder, and the taxes make not a very sensible difference on any one's way of living.

Add to this, that, where the riches are in few hands, these must enjoy all the power, and will readily conspire to lay the whole burden on the poor, and oppress them still farther, to the discouragement of all industry.

In this circumstance consists the great advantage of England above any nation at present in the world, or that appears in the records of any history. It is true, the English feel some disadvantages in foreign trade by the high price of labour, which is in part the effect of the riches of their artisans as well as of the plenty of money: but as foreign trade is not the most material circumstance, it is not to be put in competition with the happiness of so many millions. And if there were no more to endear to them that free government under which they live, this alone were sufficient. The poverty of the common people is a natural, if not an infallible effect of absolute monarchy; though I doubt, whether it be always true, on the other hand, that their riches are an infallible result of liberty. Liberty must be attended with particular accidents, and a certain turn of thinking, in order to produce that effect. Lord Bacon, accounting for the great advantages obtained by the English in their wars with France, ascribes them chiefly to the superior ease and plenty of the common people amongst the former; yet the government of the two kingdoms was, at that time, pretty much alike. Where the labourers and artisans

Digitized by Google

are accustomed to work for low wages, and to retain but a small part of the fruits of their labour, it is difficult for them, even in a free government, to better their condition, or conspire among themselves to heighten their wages. But even where they are accustomed to a more plentiful way of life, it is easy for the rich, in an arbitrary government, to conspire against *them*, and throw the whole burden of the taxes on their shoulders.

It may seem an odd position, that the poverty of the common people in France, Italy, and Spain, is, in some measure, owing to the superior riches of the soil and happiness of the climate; yet there want not reasons to justify this paradox. In such a fine mould or soil as that of those more southern regions, agriculture is an easy art, and one man, with a couple of sorry horses, will be able, in a season, to cultivate as much land as will pay a pretty considerable rent to the proprietor. All the art, which the farmer knows, is to leave his ground fallow for a year as soon as it is exhausted; and the warmth of the sun alone and temperature of the climate enrich it, and restore its fertility. Such poor peasants, therefore, require only a simple maintenance for their labour. They have no stock or riches, which claim more; and at the same time, they are for ever dependant on their landlord, who gives no leases, nor fears that his land will be spoiled by the ill methods of cultivation. In England, the land is rich, but coarse; must be cultivated at a great expense; and produces slender crops, when not carefully managed, and by a method which gives not the full profit

Digitized by Google

but in a course of several years. A farmer, therefore, in England must have a considerable stock, and a long lease, which beget proportional profits. The fine vineyards of Champagne and Burgundy that often yield to the landlord above five pounds *per* acre, are cultivated by peasants who have scarcely bread: the reason is, that such peasants need no stock but their own limbs, with instruments of husbandry, which they can buy for twenty shillings. The farmers are commonly in some better circumstances in those countries. But the graziers are most at their ease of all those who cultivate the land. The reason is still the same. Men must have profits proportionable to their expense and hazard. Where so considerable a number of the labouring poor as the peasants and farmers are in very low circumstances, all the rest must partake of their poverty, whether the government of that nation be monarchical or republican.

We may form a similar remark with regard to the general history of mankind. What is the reason, why no people, living between the tropics, could ever yet attain to any art or civility, or reach even any police in their government, and any military discipline, while few nations in the temperate climates have been altogether deprived of these advantages? It is probable that one cause of this phœnomenon is the warmth and equality of weather in the torrid zone, which render clothes and houses less requisite for the inhabitants, and thereby remove, in part, that necessity, which is the great spur to industry and invention. *Curis acuens mortalia*

Digitized by Google

corda. Not to mention, that the fewer goods or possessions of this kind any people enjoy, the fewer quarrels are likely to arise amongst them, and the less necessity will there be for a settled police or regular authority to protect and defend them from foreign enemies, or from each other.

ESSAY II.

ON THE BALANCE OF TRADE.

IT is very usual, in nations ignorant of the nature of commerce, to prohibit the exportation of commodities, and to preserve among themselves whatever they think valuable and useful. They do not consider that, in this prohibition, they act directly contrary to their intention; and that the more is exported of any commodity, the more will be raised at home, of which they themselves will always have the first offer.

It is well known to the learned, that the ancient laws of Athens rendered the exportation of figs criminal, that being supposed a species of fruit so excellent in Attica, that the Athenians deemed it too delicious for the palate of any foreigner; and in this ridiculous prohibition they were so much in earnest, that informers were thence called *sycophants* among them, from two Greek words, which signify *figs* and *discoverer* [1]. There are proofs, in many old acts of parliament, of the same ignorance

[1] PLUT. *De Curiositate.*

Digitized by Google

in the nature of commerce, particularly in the reign of Edward III. And to this day, in France, the exportation of corn is almost always prohibited; in order, as they say, to prevent famines, though it is evident that nothing contributes more to the frequent famines which so much distress that fertile country.

The same jealous fear, with regard to money, has also prevailed among several nations; and it required both reason and experience to convince any people, that these prohibitions serve to no other purpose than to raise the exchange against them, and produce a still greater exportation.

These errors, one may say, are gross and palpable: but there still prevails, even in nations well acquainted with commerce, a strong jealousy with regard to the balance of trade, and a fear, that all their gold and silver may be leaving them. This seems to me, almost in every case, a groundless apprehension; and I should as soon dread, that all our springs and rivers should be exhausted, as that money should abandon a kingdom where there are people and industry. Let us carefully preserve these latter advantages, and we need never be apprehensive of losing the former.

It is easy to observe, that all calculations concerning the balance of trade are founded on very uncertain facts and suppositions. The custom-house books are allowed to be an insufficient ground of reasoning; nor is the rate of exchange much better; unless we consider it with all nations, and know also the proportions of the several sums remitted,

Digitized by Google

which one may safely pronounce impossible. Every man, who has ever reasoned on this subject, has always proved his theory, whatever it was, by facts and calculations, and by an enumeration of all the commodities sent to all foreign kingdoms.

The writings of Mr. Gee struck the nation with an universal panic, when they saw it plainly demonstrated, by a detail of particulars, that the balance was against them for so considerable a sum as must leave them without a single shilling in five or six years. But, luckily, twenty years have since elapsed, with an expensive foreign war; yet is it commonly supposed that money is still more plentiful among us than in any former period.

Nothing can be more entertaining on this head than Dr. Swift, an author so quick in discerning the mistakes and absurdities of others. He says, in his *short view of the state of* Ireland, that the whole cash of that kingdom formerly amounted but to 500,000l.; that out of this the Irish remitted every year a neat million to England, and had scarcely any other source from which they could compensate themselves, and little other foreign trade than the importation of French wines, for which they paid ready money. The consequence of this situation, which must be owned to be disadvantageous, was, that, in a course of three years, the current money of Ireland, from 500,000l. was reduced to less than two. And at present, I suppose, in a course of thirty years it is absolutely nothing. Yet I know not how that opinion of the advance of riches in Ireland, which gave the Doctor so

Digitized by Google

much indignation, seems still to continue, and gain ground with every body.

In short, this apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself, wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits; and as it can never be refuted by a particular detail of all the exports, which counterbalance the imports, it may here be proper to form a general argument, that may prove the impossibility of this event, as long as we preserve our people and our industry.

Suppose four-fifths of all the money in Great Britain to be annihilated in one night, and the nation reduced to the same condition, with regard to specie, as in the reigns of the Harrys and Edwards, what would be the consequence! Must not the price of all labour and commodities sink in proportion, and every thing be sold as cheap as they were in those ages! What nation could then dispute with us in any foreign market, or pretend to navigate or to sell manufactures at the same price, which to us would afford sufficient profit! In how little time, therefore, must this bring back the money which we had lost, and raise us to the level of all the neighbouring nations! Where, after we have arrived, we immediately lose the advantage of the cheapness of labour and commodities; and the farther flowing in of money is stopped by our fulness and repletion.

Again, suppose that all the money of Great Britain were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow! Must not all labour

Digitized by Google

and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; while their commodities, on the other hand, became comparatively so cheap, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out, till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches which had laid us under such disadvantages!

Now, it is evident, that the same causes, which would correct these exorbitant inequalities, were they to happen miraculously, must prevent their happening in the common course of nature, and must for ever, in all neighbouring nations, preserve money nearly proportionable to the art and industry of each nation. All water, wherever it communicates, remains always at a level. Ask naturalists the reason; they tell you, that, were it to be raised in any one place, the superior gravity of that part not being balanced, must depress it, till it meet a counterpoise; and that the same cause, which redresses the inequality when it happens, must for ever prevent it, without some violent external operation[1].

[1] There is another cause, though more limited in its operation, which checks the wrong balance of trade, to every particular nation to which the kingdom trades. When we import more goods than we export, the exchange turns against us, and this becomes a new encouragement to export; as much as the charge of carriage and insurance of the money which becomes due would amount to. For the exchange can never rise but a little higher than that sum.

Digitized by Google

Can one imagine that it had ever been possible, by any laws, or even by any art or industry, to have kept all the money in Spain, which the galleons have brought from the Indies! or that all commodities could be sold in France for a tenth of the price which they would yield on the other side of the Pyrenees, without finding their way thither, and draining from that immense treasure! What other reason, indeed, is there, why all nations, at present, gain in their trade with Spain and Portugal, but because it is impossible to heap up money, more than any fluid, beyond its proper level! The sovereigns of these countries have shown, that they wanted not inclination to keep their gold and silver to themselves, had it been in any degree practicable.

But as any body of water may be raised above the level of the surrounding element, if the former has no communication with the latter; so in money, if the communication be cut off, by any material or physical impediment (for all laws alone are ineffectual), there may, in such a case, be a very great inequality of money. Thus the immense distance of China, together with the monopolies of our India companies, obstructing the communication, preserve in Europe the gold and silver, especially the latter, in much greater plenty than they are found in that kingdom. But, notwithstanding this great obstruction, the force of the causes above mentioned is still evident. The skill and ingenuity of Europe in general surpass perhaps those of China, with regard to manual arts and manufactures, yet

Digitized by Google

are we never able to trade thither without grea disadvantage : and were it not for the continua recruits, which we receive from America, money would soon sink in Europe, and rise in China, til it came nearly to a level in both places. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that industrious nation, were they as near us as Poland or Barbary, would drain us of the overplus of our specie, and draw to themselves a larger share of the West India treasures. We need not have recourse to a physical attraction in order to explain the necessity of this operation : there is a moral attraction, arising from the interests and passions of men, which is fully as potent and infallible.

How is the balance kept in the provinces of every kingdom among themselves, but by the force of this principle, which makes it impossible for money to lose its level, and either to rise or sink beyond the proportion of the labour and commodities which are in each province? Did not long experience make people easy on this head, what a fund of gloomy reflections might calculations afford to a melancholy Yorkshireman, while he computed and magnified the sums drawn to London by taxes, absentees, commodities, and found on comparison the opposite articles so much inferior! And no doubt, had the *Heptarchy* subsisted in England, the legislature of each state had been continually alarmed by the fear of a wrong balance; and as it is probable that the mutual hatred of these states would have been extremely violent on account of their close neighbourhood, they would have loaded

Digitized by Google

and oppressed all commerce by a jealous and superfluous caution. Since the union has removed the barriers between Scotland and England, which of these nations gains from the other by this free commerce? Or if the former kingdom has received any increase of riches, can it reasonably be accounted for by any thing but the increase of its art and industry? It was a common apprehension in England, before the union, as we learn from l'Abbé du Bos [1], that Scotland would soon drain them of their treasure, were an open trade allowed; and on the other side the Tweed a contrary apprehension prevailed—with what justice in both, time has shown.

What happens in small portions of mankind, must take place in greater. The provinces of the Roman empire, no doubt, kept their balance with each other, and with Italy, independent of the legislature; as much as the several counties of Great Britain, or the several parishes of each county. And any man who travels over Europe at this day, may see, by the prices of commodities, that money, in spite of the absurd jealousy of princes and states, has brought itself nearly to a level; and that the difference between one kingdom and another is not greater in this respect than it is often between different provinces of the same kingdom. Men naturally flock to capital cities, sea-ports, and navigable rivers. There we find more men, more industry, more commodities, and consequently

[1] *Les intérêts de l'Angleterre mal entendus.*

Digitized by Google

more money; but still the latter difference holds proportion with the former, and the level is preserved [1].

Our jealousy and our hatred of France are without bounds; and the former sentiment, at least, must be acknowledged reasonable and well-grounded. These passions have occasioned innumerable barriers and obstructions upon commerce, where we are accused of being commonly the aggressors. But what have we gained by the bargain! We lost the French market for our woollen manufactures, and transferred the commerce of wine to Spain and Portugal, where we buy worse liquor at a higher price. There are few Englishmen who would not think their country absolutely ruined, were French wines sold in England so

[1] It must carefully be remarked, that throughout this discourse, wherever I speak of the level of money, I mean always its proportional level to the commodities, labour, industry, and skill, which is in the several states. And I assert, that where these advantages are double, triple, quadruple, to what they are in the neighbouring states, the money infallibly would also be double, triple, quadruple. The only circumstance, that can obstruct the exactness of these proportions, is the expense of transporting the commodities from one place to another; and this expense is sometimes unequal. Thus the corn, cattle, cheese, butter, of Derbyshire, cannot draw the money of London, so much as the manufactures of London draw the money of Derbyshire. But this objection is only a seeming one: for so far as the transport of commodities is expensive, so far is the communication between the places obstructed and imperfect.

Digitized by Google

cheap and in such abundance as to supplant, in some measure, all ale and home-brewed liquors. But would we lay aside prejudice, it would not be difficult to prove, that nothing could be more innocent, perhaps advantageous. Each new acre of vineyard planted in France, in order to supply England with wine, would make it requisite for the French to take the produce of an English acre, sown in wheat or barley, in order to subsist themselves; and it is evident, that we should thereby get command of the better commodity.

There are many edicts of the French king, prohibiting the planting of new vineyards, and ordering all those which are lately planted to be grubbed up: so sensible are they, in that country, of the superior value of corn, above every other product.

Mareschal Vauban complains often, and with reason, of the absurd duties which load the entry of those wines of Languedoc, Guienne, and other southern provinces, that are imported into Britany and Normandy. He entertained no doubt but these latter provinces could preserve their balance, notwithstanding the open commerce which he recommends. And it is evident, that a few leagues more navigation to England would make no difference; or if it did, that it must operate alike on the commodities of both kingdoms.

There is indeed one expedient by which it is possible to sink, and another by which we may raise money beyond its natural level in any kingdom; but these cases, when examined, will be found to

Digitized by Google

resolve into our general theory, and to bring additional authority to it.

I scarcely know any method of sinking money below its level, but those institutions of banks, funds, and paper-credit, which are so much practised in this kingdom. These render paper equivalent to money, circulate it throughout the whole state, make it supply the place of gold and silver, raise proportionably the price of labour and commodities, and by that means either banish a *great* part of those precious metals, or prevent their farther increase. What can be more short-sighted than our reasonings on this head! We fancy, because an individual would be much richer, were his stock of money doubled, that the same good effect would follow were the money of every one increased; not considering, that this would raise as much the price of every commodity, and reduce every man in time to the same condition as before. It is only in our public negotiations and transactions with foreigners, that a greater stock of money is advantageous; and as our paper is there absolutely insignificant, we feel, by its means, all the ill effects arising from a great abundance of money, without reaping any of the advantages [1].

[1] We shall remark that money, when increasing, gives encouragement to industry, during the interval between the increase of money and rise of the prices. A good effect of this nature may follow too from paper-credit; but it is dangerous to precipitate matters, at the risk of losing all by the failing of that credit, as must happen upon any violent shock in public affairs.

Digitized by Google

Suppose that there are 12 millions of paper, which circulate in the kingdom as money (for we are not to imagine that all our enormous funds are employed in that shape), and suppose the real cash of the kingdom to be 18 millions; here is a state which is found by experience to be able to hold a stock of 30 millions. I say, if it be able to hold it, it must of necessity have acquired it in gold and silver, had we not obstructed the entrance of these metals by this new invention of paper. *Whence would it have acquired that sum?* From all the kingdoms of the world. *But why?* Because, if you remove these 12 millions, money in this state is below its level, compared with our neighbours: and we must immediately draw from all of them, till we be full and saturate, so to speak, and can hold no more. By our present politics we are as careful to stuff the nation with this fine commodity of bank-bills and chequer-notes, as if we were afraid of being overburdened with the precious metals.

It is not to be doubted, but the great plenty of bullion in France is, in a great measure, owing to the want of paper-credit. The French have no banks: merchants' bills do not there circulate as with us: usury, or lending on interest, is not directly permitted; so that many have large sums in their coffers: great quantities of plate are used in private houses; and all the churches are full of it. By this means, provisions and labour still remain cheaper among them, than in nations that are not half so rich in gold and silver. The

Digitized by Google

advantages of this situation, in point of trade, as well as in great public emergencies, are too evident to be disputed.

The same fashion a few years ago prevailed in Genoa, which still has place in England and Holland, of using services of China-ware instead of plate; but the senate, foreseeing the consequence, prohibited the use of that brittle commodity beyond a certain extent; while the use of silver-plate was left unlimited. And I suppose, in their late distresses, they felt the good effect of this ordinance. Our tax on plate is, perhaps, in this view, somewhat impolitic.

Before the introduction of paper-money into our colonies, they had gold and silver sufficient for their circulation. Since the introduction of that commodity, the least inconveniency that has followed is the total banishment of the precious metals. And after the abolition of paper, can it be doubted but money will return, while these colonies possess manufactures and commodities, the only thing valuable in commerce, and for whose sake alone all men desire money!

What pity Lycurgus did not think of paper-credit when he wanted to banish gold and silver from Sparta! It would have served his purpose better than the lumps of iron he made use of as money; and would also have prevented more effectually all commerce with strangers, as being of so much less real and intrinsic value.

It must, however, be confessed, that, as all these questions of trade and money are extremely

Digitized by Google

complicated, there are certain lights, in which this subject may be placed so as to represent the advantages of paper-credit and banks to be superior to their disadvantages. That they banish specie and bullion from a state is undoubtedly true; and whoever looks no farther than this circumstance does well to condemn them: but specie and bullion are not of so great consequence as not to admit of a compensation, and even an overbalance from the increase of industry and of credit, which may be promoted by the right use of paper-money. It is well known of what advantage it is to a merchant to be able to discount his bills upon occasion: and every thing that facilitates this species of traffic is favourable to the general commerce of a state. But private bankers are enabled to give such credit by the credit they receive from the depositing of money in their shops; and the bank of England in the same manner, from the liberty it has to issue its notes in all payments. There was an invention of this kind, which was fallen upon some years ago by the banks of Edinburgh; and which, as it is one of the most ingenious ideas that has been executed in commerce, has also been thought advantageous to Scotland. It is there called a Bank-Credit, and is of this nature. A man goes to the bank and finds surety to the amount, we shall suppose, of a thousand pounds. This money, or any part of it, he has the liberty of drawing out whenever he pleases, and he pays only the ordinary interest for it, while it is in his hands. He may, when he pleases, repay any sum so small as twenty pounds, and the interest is discounted

Digitized by Google

from the very day of the repayment. The advantages, resulting from this contrivance, are manifold. As a man may find surety nearly to the amount of his substance, and his bank-credit is equivalent to ready money, a merchant does hereby in a manner coin his houses, his household furniture, the goods in his warehouse, the foreign debts due to him, his ships at sea; and can, upon occasion, employ them in all payments, as if they were the current money of the country. If a man borrow a thousand pounds from a private hand, besides that it is not always to be found when required, he pays interest for it, whether he be using it or not: his bank-credit costs him nothing except during the very moment in which it is of service to him: and this circumstance is of equal advantage as if he had borrowed money at much lower interest. Merchants, likewise, from this invention, acquire a great facility in supporting each other's credit, which is a considerable security against bankruptcies. A man, when his own bank-credit is exhausted, goes to any of his neighbours who is not in the same condition, and he gets the money, which he replaces at his convenience.

After this practice had taken place during some years at Edinburgh, several companies of merchants at Glasgow carried the matter farther. They associated themselves into different banks, and issued notes so low as ten shillings, which they used in all payments for goods, manufactures, tradesmen's labour of all kinds; and these notes, from the established credit of the companies, passed as money in all payments throughout the country. By this

Digitized by Google

means, a stock of five thousand pounds was able to perform the same operations as if it were six or seven; and merchants were thereby enabled to trade to a greater extent, and to require less profit in all their transactions. But whatever other advantages result from these inventions, it must still be allowed that besides giving too great facility to credit, which is dangerous, they banish the precious metals; and nothing can be a more evident proof of it, than a comparison of the past and present condition of Scotland in that particular. It was found, upon the recoinage made after the Union, that there was near a million of specie in that country: but notwithstanding the great increase of riches, commerce, and manufactures of all kinds, it is thought, that, even where there is no extraordinary drain made by England, the current specie will not amount to a third of that sum.

But as our projects of paper-credit are almost the only expedient by which we can sink money below its level; so, in my opinion, the only expedient, by which we can raise money above it, is a practice which we should all exclaim against as destructive, namely the gathering of large sums into a public treasure, locking them up, and absolutely preventing their circulation. The fluid, not communicating with the neighbouring element, may, by such an artifice, be raised to what height we please. To prove this, we need only return to our first supposition, of annihilating the half or any part of our cash; where we found, that the immediate consequence of such an event would be the attraction of

an equal sum from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Nor does there seem to be any necessary bounds set, by the nature of things, to this practice of hoarding. A small city, like Geneva, continuing this policy for ages, might engross nine-tenths of the money in Europe. There seems, indeed, in the nature of man, an invincible obstacle to that immense growth of riches. A weak state, with an enormous treasure, will soon become a prey to some of its poorer, but more powerful neighbours. A great state would dissipate its wealth in dangerous and ill-concerted projects; and probably destroy, with it, what is much more valuable, the industry, morals, and numbers of its people. The fluid, in this case, raised to too great a height, bursts and destroys the vessel that contains it; and mixing itself with the surrounding element, soon falls to its proper level.

So little are we commonly acquainted with this principle, that, though all historians agree in relating uniformly so recent an event, as the immense treasure amassed by Harry VII (which they make amount to 2,700,000 pounds), we rather reject their concurring testimony, than admit of a fact which agrees so ill with our inveterate prejudices. It is indeed probable, that this sum might be three-fourths of all the money in England. But where is the difficulty in conceiving, that such a sum might be amassed in twenty years, by a cunning, rapacious, frugal, and almost absolute monarch! Nor is it probable that the diminution of circulating money was ever sensibly felt by the people, or ever did them any prejudice. The sinking of the prices of all

Digitized by Google

commodities would immediately replace it, by giving England the advantage in its commerce with the neighbouring kingdoms.

Have we not an instance in the small republic of Athens with its allies, who, in about fifty years, between the Median and Peloponnesian wars, amassed a sum not much inferior to that of Harry VII! For all the Greek historians [1] and orators [2] agree, that the Athenians collected in the citadel more than 10,000 talents, which they afterwards dissipated to their own ruin, in rash and imprudent enterprizes. But when this money was set a running, and began to communicate with the surrounding fluid, what was the consequence! Did it remain in the state! No. For we find, by the memorable *census* mentioned by Demosthenes [3] and Polybius [4], that, in about fifty years afterwards, the whole value of the republic, comprehending lands, houses, commodities, slaves, and money, was less than 6000 talents.

What an ambitious high-spirited people was this, to collect and keep in their treasury, with a view to conquest, a sum, which it was every day in the power of the citizens, by a single vote, to distribute among themselves, and which would have gone near to triple the riches of every individual! For we must observe, that the numbers and private riches of the

[1] THUCYDID. *lib. II.* and DIOD. SIC. *lib. XII.*
[2] Vid. ÆSCHINIS et DEMOSTHENIS *Epist.*
[3] Περὶ Συμμοείας.
[4] *Lib. II, cap. 62.*

Digitized by Google

Athenians are said, by ancient writers, to have been no greater at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war than at the beginning of the Macedonian.

Money was little more plentiful in Greece, during the age of Philip and Perseus, than in England during that of Harry VII: yet these two monarchs in thirty years [1] collected from the small kingdom of Macedon a larger treasure than that of the English monarch. Paulus Æmilius brought to Rome about 1,700,000 pounds *sterling* [2]. Pliny says, 2,400,000 [3], and that was but a part of the Macedonian treasure. The rest was dissipated by the resistance and flight of Perseus [4].

We may learn from Stanian, that the canton of Berne had 300,000 pounds lent at interest, and had above six times as much in their treasury. Here then is a sum hoarded of 1,800,000 pounds *sterling*, which is at least quadruple to what should naturally circulate in such a petty state; and yet no one, who travels in the Pays de Vaud, or any part of that canton, observes any want of money more than could be supposed in a country of that extent, soil, and situation. On the contrary, there are scarce any inland provinces in the continent of France or Germany, where the inhabitants are at this time so opulent, though that canton has vastly increased its treasure since 1714, the time when

[1] TIT. LIV. *lib. XLV, cap. 40.*
[2] VELL. PATERC. *lib. I, cap. 9.*
[3] *Lib. XXXIII, cap. 3.*
[4] TIT. LIV. *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

Stanian wrote his judicious account of Switzerland [1].

The account given by Appian [2] of the treasure of the Ptolemies is so prodigious that one cannot admit it; and so much the less, because the historian says that the other successors of Alexander were also frugal, and had many of them treasures not much inferior. For this saving humour of the neighbouring princes must necessarily have checked the frugality of the Egyptian monarchs, according to the foregoing theory. The sum he mentions is 740,000 talents, or 191,166,666 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's computation. And yet Appian says that he extracted his account from the public records; and he was himself a native of Alexandria.

From these principles we may learn what judgment we ought to form of those numberless bars, obstructions, and imposts, which all nations of Europe, and none more than England, have put upon trade, from an exorbitant desire of amassing money, which never will heap up beyond its level, while it circulates, or from an ill-grounded apprehension of losing their specie, which never will sink below it. Could any thing scatter our riches, it would be such impolitic contrivances. But this

[1] The poverty which Stanian speaks of is only to be seen in the most mountainous cantons, where there is no commodity to bring money. And even there the people are not poorer than in the diocese of Saltsburgh on the one hand, or Savoy on the other.

[2] *Proem.*

Digitized by Google

general ill effect, however, results from them, that they deprive neighbouring nations of that free communication and exchange which the Author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other.

Our modern politics embrace the only method of banishing money, the using of paper-credit; they reject the only method of amassing it, the practice of hoarding; and they adopt a hundred contrivances, which serve to no purpose but to check industry, and rob ourselves and our neighbours of the common benefits of art and nature.

All taxes, however, upon foreign commodities, are not to be regarded as prejudicial or useless, but those only which are founded on the jealousy abovementioned. A tax on German linen encourages home manufactures, and thereby multiplies our people and industry. A tax on brandy increases the sale of rum, and supports our southern colonies. And as it is necessary, that imposts should be levied for the support of government, it may be thought more convenient to lay them on foreign commodities, which can easily be intercepted at the port, and subjected to the impost. We ought, however, always to remember the maxim of Dr. Swift, that, in the arithmetic of the customs, two and two make not four, but often make only one. It can scarcely be doubted, but if the duties on wine were lowered to a third, they would yield much more to the government than at present: our people might thereby afford to drink commonly a better and more wholesome liquor, and no prejudice would ensue to

Digitized by Google

the balance of trade, of which we are so jealous. The manufacture of ale beyond the agriculture is but inconsiderable, and gives employment to few hands. The transport of wine and corn would not be much inferior.

But are there not frequent instances, you will say, of states and kingdoms, which were formerly rich and opulent, and are now poor and beggarly! Has not the money left them with which they formerly abounded! I answer: if they lose their trade, industry, and people, they cannot expect to keep their gold and silver; for these precious metals will hold proportion to the former advantages. When Lisbon and Amsterdam got the East-India trade from Venice and Genoa, they also got the profits and money which arose from it. Where the seat of government is transferred, where expensive armies are maintained at a distance, where great funds are possessed by foreigners, there naturally follows from these causes a diminution of the specie. But these, we may observe, are violent and forcible methods of carrying away money, and are in time commonly attended with the transport of people and industry. But where these remain, and the drain is not continued, the money always finds its way back again, by a hundred canals, of which we have no notion or suspicion. What immense treasures have been spent, by so many nations, in Flanders, since the revolution, in the course of three long wars! More money perhaps than the half of what is at present in Europe. But what has now become of it! Is it in the narrow compass of the

Digitized by Google

Austrian provinces! No, surely: it has most of it returned to the several countries whence it came, and has followed that art and industry by which at first it was acquired. For above a thousand years the money of Europe has been flowing to Rome by an open and sensible current, but it has been emptied by many secret and insensible canals; and the want of industry and commerce renders at present the papal dominions the poorest territory in all Italy.

In short, a government has great reason to preserve with care its people and its manufactures. Its money, it may safely trust to the course of human affairs without fear or jealousy: or if it ever give attention to this latter circumstance, it ought only to be so far as it affects the former.

ESSAY III.

ON THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

NOTHING requires greater nicety, in our inquiries concerning human affairs, than to distinguish exactly what is owing to *chance*, and what proceeds from *causes*; nor is there any subject, in which an author is more liable to deceive himself by false subtilties and refinements. To say, that any event is derived from chance, cuts short all farther inquiry concerning it, and leaves the writer in the same state of ignorance with the rest of

Digitized by Google

mankind. But when the event is supposed to proceed from certain and stable causes, he may then display his ingenuity, in assigning these causes; and as a man of any subtilty can never be at a loss in this particular, he has thereby an opportunity of swelling his volumes, and discovering his profound knowledge, in observing what escapes the vulgar and ignorant.

The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man's sagacity, in considering every particular incident. But, if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following: *What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes. What arises from a great number may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes.*

Two natural reasons may be assigned for this rule. *First,* if you suppose a dye to have any bias, however small, to a particular side, this bias, though, perhaps, it may not appear in a few throws, will certainly prevail in a great number, and will cast the balance entirely to that side. In like manner, when any *causes* beget a particular inclination or passion, at a certain time, and among certain people, though many individuals may escape the contagion, and be ruled by a passion peculiar to themselves, yet the multitude will certainly be seized by the common affection, and be governed by it in all their actions.

Secondly, those principles or causes, which are fitted to operate on a multitude, are always of a

Digitized by Google

grosser and more stubborn nature, less subject to accidents, and less influenced by whim and private fancy than those which operate on a few only. The latter are commonly so delicate and refined, that the smallest incident in the health, education, or fortune of a particular person, is sufficient to divert their course, and retard their operation; nor is it possible to reduce them to any general maxims or observations. Their influence at one time will never assure us concerning their influence at another; even though all the general circumstances should be the same in both cases.

To judge by this rule, the domestic and the gradual revolutions of a state must be a more proper subject of reasoning and observation, than the foreign and the violent, which are commonly produced by single persons, and are more influenced by whim, folly, or caprice, than by general passions and interests. The depression of the lords, and rise of the commons in England, after the statutes of alienation and the increase of trade and industry, are more easily accounted for by general principles, than the depression of the Spanish, and rise of the French monarchy, after the death of Charles Quint. Had Henry IV, Cardinal Richelieu, and Louis XIV, been Spaniards; and Philip II, III, and IV, and Charles II, been Frenchmen, the history of these two nations had been entirely reversed.

For the same reason, it is more easy to account for the rise and progress of commerce in any

Digitized by Google

kingdom than for that of learning; and a state, which should apply itself to the encouragement of the one, would be more assured of success than one which should cultivate the other. Avarice, or the desire of gain, is an universal passion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all persons: but curiosity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence, and requires youth, leisure, education, genius, and example, to make it govern any person. You will never want booksellers while there are buyers of books: but there may frequently be readers where there are no authors. Multitudes of people, necessity and liberty, have begotten commerce in Holland: but study and application have scarcely produced any eminent writers.

We may, therefore, conclude, that there is no subject, in which we must proceed with more caution, than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences, lest we assign causes which never existed, and reduce what is merely contingent to stable and universal principles. Those who cultivate the sciences in any state, are always few in number; the passion, which governs them, limited; their taste and judgment delicate and easily perverted; and their application disturbed with the smallest accident. Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts.

But there is a reason, which induces me not to ascribe the matter altogether to chance. Though the persons, who cultivate the sciences with such

Digitized by Google

astonishing success as to attract the admiration of posterity, be always few, in all nations and all ages, it is impossible but a share of the same spirit and genius must be antecedently diffused through the people among whom they arise, in order to produce, form, and cultivate, from their earliest infancy, the taste and judgment of those eminent writers. The mass cannot be altogether insipid from which such refined spirits are extracted. *There is a God within us,* says Ovid, *who breathes that divine fire by which we are animated* [1]. Poets in all ages have advanced this claim to inspiration. There is not, however, any thing super-natural in the case. Their fire is not kindled from heaven. It only runs along the earth; is caught from one breast to another, and burns brightest where the materials are best prepared, and most happily disposed. The question, therefore, concerning the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is not altogether a question concerning the taste, genius, and spirit of a few, but concerning those of a whole people; and may, therefore, be accounted for, in some measure, by general causes and principles. I grant, that a man, who should inquire, why such a particular poet, as Homer, for instance, existed, at such a place, in such a time, would throw himself headlong into chimæras, and could never treat of such a subject without a multitude of false

[1] *Est Deus in nobis ; agitante calescimus illo :*
Impetus hic sacræ semina mentis habet.
OVID. Fast. *lib. 1.*

Digitized by Google

subtilties and refinements. He might as well pretend to give reasons, why such particular generals, as Fabius and Scipio, lived in Rome at such a time, and why Fabius came into the world before Scipio. For such incidents as these no other reason can be given than that of Horace:

Scit genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum,
Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum—
—Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus et ater.

But I am persuaded that in many cases good reasons might be given, why such a nation is more polite and learned, at a particular time, than any of its neighbours. At least, this is so curious a subject, that it were a pity to abandon it entirely, before we have found whether it be susceptible of reasoning, and can be reduced to any general principles.

My first observation on this head is, *That it is impossible for the arts and sciences to arise, at first, among any people, unless that people enjoy the blessing of a free government.*

In the first ages of the world, when men are as yet barbarous and ignorant, they seek no farther security against mutual violence and injustice, than the choice of some rulers, few or many, in whom they place an implicit confidence, without providing any security, by laws or political institutions, against the violence and injustice of these rulers. If the authority be centered in a single person, and if the people, either by conquest, or by the ordinary course of propagation, increase to a great multitude,

Digitized by Google

the monarch, finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates, who preserve peace and order in their respective districts. As experience and education have not yet refined the judgments of men to any considerable degree, the prince, who is himself unrestrained, never dreams of restraining his ministers, but delegates his full authority to *every one*, whom he sets over any portion of the people. *All* general laws are attended with inconveniencies, when applied to particular cases; and it requires great penetration and experience, both to perceive that these inconveniencies are fewer than what result from full discretionary powers in every magistrate, and also to discern what general laws are, upon the whole, attended with fewest inconveniencies. This is a matter of so great difficulty, that men may have made some advances, even in the sublime arts of poetry and eloquence, where a rapidity of genius and imagination assists their progress, before they have arrived at any great refinement in their municipal laws, where frequent trials and diligent observation can alone direct their improvements. It is not, therefore, to be supposed, that a barbarous monarch, unrestrained and uninstructed, will ever become a legislator, or think of restraining his *Bashaws*, in every province, or even his *Cadis*, in every village. We are told, that the late *Czar*, though actuated with a noble genius, and smit with the love and admiration of European arts, yet professed an esteem for the Turkish policy

Digitized by Google

in this particular, and approved of such summary decisions of causes, as are practised in that barbarous monarchy, where the judges are not restrained by any methods, forms, or laws. He did not perceive how contrary such a practice would have been to all his other endeavours for refining his people. Arbitrary power, in all cases, is somewhat oppressive and debasing: but it is altogether ruinous and intolerable, when contracted into a small compass; and becomes still worse, when the person, who possesses it, knows that the time of his authority is limited and uncertain. *Habet subjectos tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos* [1]. He governs the subjects with full authority, as if they were his own; and with negligence or tyranny, as belonging to another. A people, governed after such a manner, are slaves in the full and proper sense of the word; and it is impossible they can ever aspire to any refinements of taste or reason. They dare not so much as pretend to enjoy the necessaries of life in plenty or security.

To expect, therefore, that the arts and sciences should take their rise in a monarchy, is to expect a contradiction. Before these refinements have taken place, the monarch is ignorant and uninstructed; and not having knowledge sufficient to make him sensible of the necessity of balancing his government upon general laws, he delegates his full power to all inferior magistrates. This barbarous policy debases the people, and for ever prevents all

[1] TACIT. Hist. *lib. 1.*

Digitized by Google

improvements. Were it possible, that, before science were known in the world, a monarch could possess so much wisdom as to become a legislator, and govern his people by law, not by the arbitrary will of their fellow-subjects, it might be possible for that species of government to be the first nursery of arts and sciences. But that supposition seems scarcely to be consistent or rational.

It may happen, that a republic, in its infant state, may be supported by as few laws as a barbarous monarchy, and may intrust as unlimited an authority to its magistrates or judges. But, besides that the frequent elections by the people are a considerable check upon authority, it is impossible but, in time, the necessity of restraining the magistrates, in order to preserve liberty, must at last appear, and give rise to general laws and statutes. The Roman Consuls, for some time, decided all causes, without being confined by any positive statutes, till the people, bearing this yoke with impatience, created the *decemvirs*, who promulgated the *twelve tables*, a body of laws, which, though, perhaps, not equal in bulk to one English act of parliament, were almost the only written rules, which regulated property and punishment, for some ages, in that famous republic. They were, however, sufficient, together with the forms of a free government, to secure the lives and properties of the citizens; to exempt one man from the dominion of another; and to protect every one against the violence or tyranny of his fellow-citizens. In such a situation the sciences may raise their heads and

Digitized by Google

flourish, but never can have being amidst such a scene of oppression and slavery, as always results from barbarous monarchies, where the people alone are restrained by the authority of the magistrates, and the magistrates are not restrained by any law or statute. An unlimited despotism of this nature, while it exists, effectually puts a stop to all improvements, and keeps men from attaining that knowledge, which is requisite to instruct them in the advantages arising from a better police, and more moderate authority.

Here then are the advantages of free states. Though a republic should be barbarous it necessarily, by an infallible operation, gives rise to law, even before mankind have made any considerable advances in the other sciences. From law arises security; from security, curiosity; and from curiosity, knowledge. The latter steps of this progress may be more accidental; but the former are altogether necessary. A republic without laws can never have any duration. On the contrary, in a monarchical government, law arises not necessarily from the forms of government. Monarchy, when absolute, contains even something repugnant to law. Great wisdom and reflexion can alone reconcile them: and such a degree of wisdom can never be expected before the greater refinements and improvements of human reason. These refinements require curiosity, security, and law. The *first* growth, therefore, of the arts and sciences can never be expected in despotic governments.

There are other causes which discourage the rise

Digitized by Google

of the refined arts in despotic governments; though I take the want of laws, and the delegation of full powers to every petty magistrate, to be the principal. Eloquence certainly springs up more naturally in popular governments: emulation too, in every accomplishment, must there be more animated and enlivened; and genius and capacity have a fuller scope and career. All these causes render free governments the only proper *nursery* for the arts and sciences.

The next observation, which I shall make on this head, is, *That nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy.* The emulation, which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement: but what I would chiefly insist on is the stop, which such limited territories give both to *power* and to *authority.*

Extended governments, where a single person has great influence, soon become absolute; but small ones change naturally into commonwealths. A large government is accustomed by degrees to tyranny, because each act of violence is at first performed upon a part, which, being distant from the majority, is not taken notice of, nor excites any violent ferment. Besides, a large government, though the whole be discontented, may, by a little art, be kept in obedience, while each part, ignorant of the resolutions of the rest, is afraid to begin any commotion or insurrection. Not to

Digitized by Google

mention, that there is a superstitious reverence for princes, which mankind naturally contract when they do not often see the sovereign, and when many of them become not acquainted with him so as to perceive his weaknesses. And as large states can afford a great expense in order to support the pomp of majesty; this is a kind of fascination on men, and naturally contributes to the enslaving of them.

In a small government, any act of oppression is immediately known throughout the whole: the murmurs and discontents, proceeding from it, are easily communicated; and the indignation arises the higher, because the subjects are not apt to apprehend, in such states, that the distance is very wide between themselves and their sovereign. "No man," said the prince of Condé, "is a hero "to his *valet de chambre.*" It is certain that admiration and acquaintance are altogether incompatible towards any mortal creature. Sleep and love convinced even Alexander himself that he was not a God: but I suppose that such as daily attended him could easily, from the numberless weaknesses to which he was subject, have given him many still more convincing proofs of his humanity.

But the divisions into small states are favourable to learning, by stopping the progress of *authority* as well as that of *power*. Reputation is often as great a fascination upon men as sovereignty, and is equally destructive to the freedom of thought and examination. But where a number of neighbouring states have a great intercourse of arts and

Digitized by Google

commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other, in matters of taste and of reasoning, and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy. The contagion of popular opinion spreads not so easily from one place to another. It readily receives a check in some state or other, where it concurs not with the prevailing prejudices. And nothing but nature and reason, or, at least, what bears them a strong resemblance, can force its way through all obstacles, and unite the most rival nations into an esteem and admiration of it.

Greece was a cluster of little principalities, which soon became republics; and being united both by their near neighbourhood, and by the ties of the same language and interest, they entered into the closest intercourse of commerce and learning. There concurred a happy climate, a soil not unfertile, and a most harmonious and comprehensive language; so that every circumstance among that people seemed to favour the rise of the arts and sciences. Each city produced its several artists and philosophers, who refused to yield the preference to those of the neighbouring republics: their contention and debates sharpened the wits of men: a variety of objects was presented to the judgment, while each challenged the preference to the rest; and the sciences, not being dwarfed by the restraint of authority, were enabled to make such considerable shoots, as are, even at this time, the objects of our admiration. After the Roman

Digitized by Google

Christian, or *Catholic* church had spread itself over the civilized world, and had engrossed all the learning of the times, being really one large state within itself, and united under one head, this variety of sects immediately disappeared, and the Peripatetic philosophy was alone admitted into all the schools, to the utter depravation of every kind of learning. But, mankind having at length thrown off this yoke, affairs are now returned nearly to the same situation as before, and Europe is at present a copy, at large, of what Greece was formerly a pattern in miniature. We have seen the advantage of this situation in several instances. What checked the progress of the Cartesian philosophy, to which the French nation showed such a strong propensity towards the end of the last century, but the opposition made to it by the other nations of Europe, who soon discovered the weak sides of that philosophy! The severest scrutiny, which Newton's theory has undergone, proceeded not from his own countrymen, but from foreigners; and if it can overcome the obstacles, which it meets with at present in all parts of Europe, it will probably go down triumphant to the latest posterity. The English are become sensible of the scandalous licentiousness of their stage from the example of the French decency and morals. The French are convinced that their theatre has become somewhat effeminate by too much love and gallantry, and begin to approve of the more masculine taste of some neighbouring nations.

In China, there seems to be a pretty considerable

Digitized by Google

stock of politeness and science, which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them; but China is one vast empire, speaking one language, governed by one law, and sympathizing in the same manners. The authority of any teacher, such as Confucius, was propagated easily from one corner of the empire to the other. None *had courage* to resist the torrent of popular opinion; and *posterity* was not bold enough to dispute what had been universally received by their ancestors. This seems to be one natural reason, why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire. [1]

If we consider the face of the globe, Europe, of all the four parts of the world, is the most broken by seas, rivers, and mountains; and Greece of all countries of Europe. Hence these regions

[1] If it be asked how we can reconcile to the foregoing principles the happiness, riches, and good policy of the Chinese, who have always been governed by a monarch, and can scarcely form an idea of a free government, I would answer, that though the Chinese government be a pure monarchy, it is not, properly speaking, absolute. This proceeds from a peculiarity in the situation of that country. They have no neighbours, except the Tartars, from whom they were, in some measure, secured, at least seemed to be secured, by their famous wall, and by the great superiority of their numbers. By this means military discipline has always been much neglected amongst them, and their standing forces are mere militia, of the

Digitized by Google

were naturally divided into several distinct governments. And hence the sciences arose in Greece; and Europe has been hitherto the most constant habitation of them.

I have sometimes been inclined to think, that interruptions in the periods of learning, were they not attended with such a destruction of ancient books, and the records of history, would be rather favourable to the arts and sciences, by breaking the progress of authority, and dethroning the tyrannical usurpers over human reason. In this particular, they have the same influence, as interruptions in political governments and societies. Consider the blind submission of the ancient philosophers to the several masters in each school, and you will be convinced, that little good could be expected from a hundred centuries of such a servile philosophy. Even the Eclectics, who arose about the age of Augustus, notwithstanding their

worst kind, and unfit to suppress any general insurrection in countries so extremely populous. The sword, therefore, may properly be said to be always in the hand of the people, which is a sufficient restraint upon the monarch, and obliges him to lay his *Mandarins* or governors of provinces under the restraint of general laws, in order to prevent those rebellions, which we learn from history to have been so frequent and dangerous in that government. Perhaps, a pure monarchy of this kind, were it fitted for defence against foreign enemies, would be the best of all governments, as having both the tranquillity attending kingly power, and the moderation and liberty of popular assemblies.

Digitized by Google

professing to chuse freely what pleased them from every different sect, were yet, in the main, as slavish and dependent as any of their brethren, since they sought for truth not in nature, but in the several schools, where they supposed she must necessarily be found, though not united in a body, yet dispersed in parts. Upon the revival of learning, those sects of Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Pythagoreans, could never *regain any* credit or authority; and, at the same time, *by the* example of their fall, kept men from submitting, with such blind deference, to those new sects, which have attempted to gain an ascendant over them.

The *third* observation, which I shall form on this head, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is *That though the only proper* nursery *of these noble plants be a free state, yet may they be transplanted into any government; and that a republic is most favourable to the growth of the sciences, a civilized monarchy to that of the polite arts.*

To balance a large state or society, whether monarchical or republican, on general laws, is a work of so great difficulty, that no human genius, however comprehensive, is able, by the mere dint of reason and reflection, to effect it. The judgments of many must unite in this work; experience must guide their labour; time must bring it to perfection; and the feeling of inconveniencies must correct the mistakes, which they inevitably fall into, in their first trials and experiments. Hence appears the impossibility, that this undertaking

Digitized by Google

should be begun and carried on in any monarchy; since such a form of government, ere civilized, knows no other secret or policy than that of intrusting unlimited powers to every governor or magistrate, and subdividing the people into so many classes and orders of slavery. From such a situation no improvement can ever be expected in the sciences, in the liberal arts, in laws, and scarcely in the manual arts and manufactures. The same barbarism and ignorance, with which the government commences, is propagated to all posterity, and can never come to a period by the efforts or ingenuity of such unhappy slaves.

But though law, the source of all security and happiness, arises late in any government, and is the slow product of order and of liberty, it is not preserved with the same difficulty with which it is produced; but when it has once taken root, is a hardy plant, which will scarcely ever perish through the ill culture of men, or the rigour of the seasons. The arts of luxury, and much more the liberal arts which depend on a refined taste or sentiment, are easily lost because they are always relished by a few only, whose leisure, fortune, and genius, fit them for such amusements. But what is profitable to every mortal, and in common life, when once discovered, can scarcely fall into oblivion, but by the total subversion of society, and by such furious inundations of barbarous invaders, as obliterate all memory of former arts and civility. Imitation also is apt to transport these coarser and more useful arts from one climate to another,

Digitized by Google

and make them precede the refined arts in their progress, though perhaps they sprang after them in their first rise and propagation. From these causes proceed civilized monarchies, where the arts of government, first invented in free states, are preserved to the mutual advantage and security of sovereign and subject.

However perfect, therefore, the monarchical form may appear to some politicians, it owes all its perfection to the republican; nor is it possible, that a pure despotism, established among a barbarous people, can ever, by its native force and energy, refine and polish itself. It must borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments. These advantages are the sole growth of republics. The extensive despotism of a barbarous monarchy, by entering into the detail of the government, as well as into the principal points of administration, for ever prevents all such improvements.

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is

Digitized by Google

so much exempt from private jealousies or interests, that this dependence is scarcely felt. And thus a species of government arises, to which, in a high political rant, we may give the name of *Tyranny*; but which, by a just and prudent administration, may afford tolerable security to the people, and may answer most of the ends of political society.

But though in a civilized monarchy, as well as in a republic, the people have security for the enjoyment of their property, yet, in both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind. The only difference is, that, in a republic, the candidates for office must look downwards to gain the suffrages of the people; in a monarchy, they must turn their attention upwards, to court the good graces and favour of the great. To be successful in the former way, it is necessary for a man to make himself *useful* by his industry, capacity, or knowledge; to be prosperous in the latter way, it is requisite for him to render himself *agreable* by his wit, complaisance, or civility. A strong genius succeeds best in republics; a refined taste, in monarchies; and, consequently, the sciences are the more natural growth of the one, and the polite arts of the other.

Not to mention, that monarchies, receiving their chief stability from a superstitious reverence to priests and princes, have commonly abridged the liberty of reasoning with regard to religion and

Digitized by Google

politics, and consequently metaphysics and morals. All these form the most considerable branches of science. Mathematics and natural philosophy, which only remain, are not half so valuable.

Among the arts of conversation, no one pleases more than mutual deference or civility, which leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companion, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance, so natural to the human mind. A good-natured man, who is well educated, practises this civility to every mortal without premeditation or interest. But in order to render that valuable quality general among any people, it seems necessary to assist the natural disposition by some general motive. Where power rises upwards from the people to the great, as in all republics, such refinements of civility are apt to be little practised, since the whole state is, by that means, brought near to a level, and every member of it is rendered, in a great measure, independent of another. The people have the advantage, by the authority of their suffrages; the great, by the superiority of their station. But in a civilized monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people, but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition and education. Politeness of manners, therefore, arises most naturally in monarchies and courts; and where

Digitized by Google

that flourishes, none of the liberal arts will be altogether neglected or despised.

The republics in Europe are at present noted for want of politeness. *The good manners of a* Swiss, *civilized in* Holland, [1] is an expression for rusticity among the French. The English, in some degree, fall under the same censure, notwithstanding their learning and genius. And if the Venitians be an exception to the rule, they owe it, perhaps, to their communication with the other Italians, most of whose governments beget a dependence more than sufficient for civilizing their manners.

It is difficult to pronounce any judgment concerning the refinements of the ancient republics in this particular: but I am apt to suspect, that the arts of conversation were not brought so near to perfection among them as the arts of writing and composition. The scurrility of the ancient orators, in many instances, is quite shocking, and exceeds all belief. Vanity too is often not a little offensive in authors of those ages [2], as well as the common licentiousness and immodesty of their style: *Quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, manu,*

[1] *C'est la politesse d'un Suisse*
En Hollande civilisé.
ROUSSEAU.

[2] It is needless to cite Cicero or Pliny on this head; they are too much noted: but one is a little surprised to find Arrian, a very grave, judicious writer, interrupt the thread of his narration all of a sudden, to tell his readers that he himself is as eminent among the Greeks for eloquence, as Alexander was for arms. *Lib. 1.*

Digitized by Google

ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat, says Sallust in one of the gravest and most moral passages of his history. *Nam fuit ante Helenam cunnus, teterrima belli causa,* is an expression of Horace, in tracing the origin of moral good and evil. Ovid and Lucretius [1] are almost as licentious in their style as Lord Rochester, though the former were fine gentlemen and delicate writers, and the latter, from the corruption of that court in which he lived, seems to have thrown off all regard to shame and decency. Juvenal inculcates modesty with great zeal, but sets a very bad example of it if we consider the impudence of his expressions.

I shall also be bold to affirm, that among the ancients there was not much delicacy of breeding, or that polite deference and respect, which civility obliges us either to express or counterfeit towards the persons with whom we converse. Cicero was certainly one of the finest gentlemen of his age; yet I must confess I have frequently been shocked with the poor figure under which he represents his friend Atticus in those dialogues where he himself is introduced as speaker. That learned and virtuous Roman, whose dignity, though he was only a private gentleman, was inferior to that of no one in Rome, is there shown in rather a more pitiful

[1] This poet (see *lib. IV, 1165*) recommends a very extraordinary cure for love, and what one expects not to meet with in so elegant and philosophical a poem. It seems to have been the original of some of Dr. Swift's images. The elegant Catullus and Phædrus fall under the same censure.

Digitized by Google

light than Philalethes's friend in our modern dialogues. He is an humble admirer of the orator, pays him frequent compliments, and receives his instructions with all the deference which a scholar owes to his master[1]. Even Cato is treated in somewhat of a cavalier manner in the dialogues *De Finibus.*

One of the most particular details of a real dialogue, which we meet with in antiquity, is related by Polybius[2]. When Philip, king of Macedon, a prince of wit and parts, met with Titus Flaminius, one of the politest of the Romans, as we learn from Plutarch[3], accompanied with ambassadors from almost all the Greek cities, the Ætolian ambassador very abruptly tells the king, that he talked like a fool or a madman (ληρεῖν). *That's evident, says his majesty, even to a blind man;* which was a raillery on the blindness of his excellency. Yet all this did not pass the usual bounds, for the conference was not disturbed, and Flaminius was very well diverted with these strokes of humour. At the end, when Philip craved a little time to consult with his friends, of whom he had none present, the Roman general, being desirous also to show his wit, as the historian says, tells him, *that perhaps the reason, why he had none of his friends with him,*

[1] ATT. *Non mihi videtur ad beatè vivendum satis esse virtutem.* MAR. *At hercule Bruto meo videtur, cujus ego judicium, pace tuâ dixerim, longè antepono tuo.* Tusc. Quæst. *lib. V.*

[2] *Lib. XVII.*

[3] In vita Flamin.

Digitized by Google

was because he had murdered them all; which was actually the case. This unprovoked piece of rusticity is not condemned by the historian; it caused no farther resentment in Philip, than to excite a Sardonic smile, or what we call a grin; and hindered him not from renewing the conference next day. Plutarch [1] too mentions this raillery amongst the witty and agreeable sayings of Flaminius.

Cardinal Wolsey apologized for his *famous piece* of insolence, in saying, *Ego et Rex meus* [I and my King], by observing, that this expression was conformable to the *Latin* idiom, and that a Roman always named himself before the person to whom, or of whom, he spake. Yet this seems to have been an instance of want of civility among that people. The ancients made it a rule, that the person of the greatest dignity should be mentioned first in the discourse; insomuch, that we find *the* spring of a quarrel and jealousy between the Romans and Ætolians, to have been a poet's naming the Ætolians before the Romans in celebrating a victory gained by their united arms over the Macedonians [2]. Thus Livia disgusted Tiberius by placing her own name before his in an inscription [3].

No advantages in this world are pure and unmixed. In like manner, as modern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into

[1] PLUT. in vita Flamin.
[2] TACIT. Ann. *lib. III, cap. 64.*
[3] *Ibid.*

Digitized by Google

affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity, so the ancient simplicity, which is naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity.

If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of *gallantry*, the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned as the causes of this refinement. No one denies this invention to be modern [1]; but some of the more zealous partisans of the ancients have asserted it to be foppish and ridiculous, and a reproach, rather than a credit, to the present age [2]. It may here be proper to examine this question.

Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affection between the sexes, which, even in the fiercest and most rapacious animals, is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives. Nay, even in those species, where nature limits the indulgence of this appetite to one season and to one object, and forms a kind of marriage or association between a single male and female, there is yet a visible complacency and benevolence, which extends farther, and mutually softens the affections of the sexes towards each other. How much more

[1] In the *Self-Tormentor* of TERENCE, Clinias, whenever he comes to town, instead of waiting on his mistress, sends for her to come to him.

[2] Lord SHAFTESBURY—see his *Moralists*.

Digitized by Google

must this have place in man, where the confinement of the appetite is not natural, but either is derived accidentally from some strong charm of love, or arises from reflections on duty and convenience! Nothing, therefore, can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is *natural* in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it than on all the other laudable passions. They only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it, and give it a proper grace and expression.

But gallantry is as *generous* as it is *natural*. To correct such gross vices, as lead us to commit real injury on others, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education. Where *that* is not attended to, in some degree, no human society can subsist. But in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good-manners have been invented, and have carried the matter somewhat farther. Wherever nature has given the mind a propensity to any vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the bias on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behaviour, the appearance of sentiments different from those to which they naturally incline. Thus, as we are commonly proud and selfish, and apt to assume the preference above others, a polite man learns to behave with deference towards his companions, and to yield the superiority to them in all the common incidents of society. In like manner,

Digitized by Google

wherever a person's situation may naturally beget any disagreeable suspicion in him, it is the part of good-manners to prevent it, by a studied display of sentiments, directly contrary to those of which he is apt to be jealous. Thus, old men know their infirmities, and naturally dread contempt from the youth: hence, well-educated youth redouble the instances of respect and deference to their elders. Strangers and foreigners are without protection: hence, in all polite countries, they receive the highest civilities, and are intitled to the first place in every company. A man is lord in his own family, and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority: hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of every one; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please, which may not betray too visible an affectation, or impose too much constraint on his guests [1]. Gallantry is nothing but an instance of the same generous attention. As nature has given *man* the superiority above *woman*, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body, it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour,

[1] The frequent mention in ancient authors of that ill-bred custom of the master of the family's eating better bread, or drinking better wine at table, than he afforded his guests, is but an indifferent mark of the civility of those ages. See JUVENAL. *Sat. 5*; PLIN. *lib. XIV, cap. 13*; also PLIN. *Epist.*; LUCIAN. *de mercede conductis*, *Saturnalia*, &c. There is scarcely any part of Europe at present so uncivilized as to admit of such a custom.

Digitized by Google

and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance; and, in a word, by gallantry. In good company, you need not ask, who is the master of the feast! The man, who sits in the lowest place, and who is always industrious in helping every one, is certainly the person. We must either condemn all such instances of generosity as foppish and affected, or admit of gallantry among the rest. The ancient Muscovites wedded their wives with a whip, instead of a ring. The same people, in their own houses, took always the precedency above foreigners, even [1] foreign ambassadors. These two instances of their generosity and politeness are much of a piece.

Gallantry is not less compatible with *wisdom* and *prudence*, than with *nature* and *generosity*; and when under proper regulations, contributes more than any other invention, to the *entertainment* and *improvement* of the youth of both sexes. Among every species of animals, nature has founded on the love between the sexes their sweetest and best enjoyment. But the satisfaction of the

[1] See *Relation of three Embassies*, by the Earl of CARLISLE.

Digitized by Google

bodily appetite is not alone sufficient to gratify the mind; and even among brute creatures we find that their play and dalliance, and other expressions of fondness, form the greatest part of the entertainment. In rational beings, we must certainly admit the mind for a considerable share. Were we to rob the feast of all its garniture of reason, discourse, sympathy, friendship, and gaiety, what remains would scarcely be worth acceptance, in the judgment of the truly elegant and luxurious.

What better school for manners than the company of virtuous women, where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency!

Among the ancients, the character of the fair-sex was considered as altogether domestic; nor were they regarded as part of the polite world, or of good company. This, perhaps, is the true reason why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent (unless one may except the Banquet of Xenophon, and the dialogues of Lucian), though many of their serious compositions are altogether inimitable. Horace condemns the coarse railleries and cold jests of Plautus; but, though the most easy, agreeable, and judicious writer in the world, is his own talent for ridicule very striking or refined! This, therefore, is one considerable improvement, which the polite arts have

Digitized by Google

received from gallantry, and from courts, where it first arose.

But, to return from this digression, I shall advance it as a *fourth* observation on this subject, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, *That when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation where they formerly flourished.*

It must be confessed, that this maxim, though conformable to experience, may, at first sight, be esteemed contrary to reason. If the natural genius of mankind be the same in all ages, and in almost all countries (as seems to be the truth), it must very much forward and cultivate this genius, to be possessed of patterns in every art, which may regulate the taste, and fix the objects of imitation. The models left us by the ancients gave birth to all the arts about 200 years ago, and have mightily advanced their progress in every country of Europe. Why had they not a like effect during the reign of Trajan and his successors, when they were much more entire, and were still admired and studied by the whole world! So late as the emperor Justinian, the Poet, by way of distinction, was understood, among the Greeks, to be Homer; among the Romans, Virgil. Such admiration *still* remained for these divine geniuses; though no poet had appeared for many centuries, who could justly pretend to have imitated them.

A man's genius is always, in the beginning of life, as much unknown to himself as to others;

Digitized by Google

and it is only after frequent trials, attended with success, that he dares think himself equal to those undertakings, in which those who have succeeded, have fixed the admiration of mankind. If his own nation be already possessed of many models of eloquence, he naturally compares his own juvenile exercises with these; and, being sensible of the great disproportion, is discouraged from any farther attempts, and never aims at a rivalship with those authors whom he so much admires. A noble emulation is the source of every excellence. Admiration and modesty naturally extinguish this emulation. And no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty, as a truly great genius.

Next to emulation, the greatest encourager of the noble arts is praise and glory. A writer is *animated* with new force, when he hears the *applauses* of the world for his former productions, and, being roused by such a motive, he often reaches a pitch of perfection, which is equally surprising to himself and to his readers. But, when the posts of honour are all occupied, his first attempts are but coldly received by the public, being compared to productions, which are both in themselves more excellent, and have already the advantage of an established reputation. Were Moliere and Corneille to bring upon the stage at present their early productions, which were formerly so well received, it would discourage the young poets to see the indifference and disdain of the public. The ignorance of the age alone could have given admission to the *Prince of Tyre*; but it is to that

Digitized by Google

we owe *the Moor* : had *Every man in his Humour* been rejected, we had never seen *Volpone*.

Perhaps, it may not be for the advantage of any nation to have the arts imported from their neighbours in too great perfection. This extinguishes emulation, and sinks the ardour of the generous youth. So many models of Italian painting brought into England, instead of exciting our artists, is the cause of their small progress in that noble art. The same, perhaps, was the case of Rome when it received the arts from Greece. That multitude of polite productions in the French language, dispersed all over Germany and the North, hinder these nations from cultivating their own language, and keep them still dependent on their neighbours for those elegant entertainments.

It is true, the ancients had left us models in every kind of writing, which are highly worthy of admiration. But besides that they were written in languages known only to the learned; besides this, I say, the comparison is not so perfect or entire between modern wits, and those who lived in so remote an age. Had Waller been born in Rome, during the reign of Tiberius, his first productions had been despised when compared to the finished odes of Horace. But, in this island, the superiority of the Roman poet diminished nothing from the fame of the English. We esteemed ourselves sufficiently happy, that our climate and language could produce but a faint copy of so excellent an original.

In short, the arts and sciences, like some plants,

Digitized by Google

require a fresh soil; and however rich the land may be, and however you may recruit it by art or care, it will never, when once exhausted, produce any thing that is perfect or finished in the kind.

ESSAY IV.

OF REFINEMENT IN THE ARTS.

LUXURY is a word of an uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blameable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person. The bounds between virtue and vice cannot here be exactly fixed more than in other moral subjects. To imagine, that the gratifying of any sense, or the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a head, that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. I have, indeed, heard of a monk abroad, who, because the windows of his cell opened upon a noble prospect, made a *covenant with his eyes* never to turn that way, or receive so sensual a gratification. And such is the crime of drinking Champagne or Burgundy, preferably to small beer or porter. These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself

Digitized by Google

to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists. To be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one's expence entirely to such a gratification, without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart destitute of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprised at those preposterous opinions, which have been entertained concerning it; while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and, on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and represent it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions, incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving: *first*, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; *secondly*, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious,

Digitized by Google

though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both on *private* and on *public* life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; action, pleasure, and indolence: and though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person, yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroy all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that, where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour, enlarges its powers and faculties; and,

Digitized by Google

by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and, leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits, exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age, which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers and shipcarpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a

Digitized by Google

fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding, their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise, vanity the foolish, and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an increase of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus *industry, knowledge,* and *humanity,* are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.

Nor are these advantages attended with disadvantages that bear any proportion to them. The more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses. One may safely affirm, that the Tartars are oftener guilty of beastly gluttony, when they feast on their dead horses, than European courtiers with all their refinements of cookery. And if libertine love, or even infidelity to the

Digitized by Google

mariage-bed, be more frequent in polite ages, when it is often regarded only as a piece of gallantry, drunkenness, on the other hand, is much less common; a vice more odious, and more pernicious both to mind and body. And in this matter I would appeal, not only to an Ovid or a Petronius, but to a Seneca or a Cato. We know, that Cæsar, during Catiline's conspiracy, being necessitated to put into Cato's hands a *billet-doux*, which discovered an intrigue with Servilia, Cato's own sister, that stern philosopher threw it back to him with indignation, and, in the bitterness of his wrath, gave him the appellation of drunkard, as a term more opprobrious than that with which he could more justly have reproached him.

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone: they diffuse their beneficial influence on the *public*, and render the government as great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The increase and consumption of all the commodities, which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society; because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of *storehouse* of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In a nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies, from the industry of such slothful members.

Digitized by Google

The bounds of all the European kingdoms are, at present, nearly the same they were two hundred years ago; but what a difference is there in the power and grandeur of those kingdoms! which can be ascribed to nothing but the increase of art and industry. When Charles VIII of France invaded Italy, he carried with him about 20,000 men: yet this armament so exhausted the nation, as we learn from Guicciardin, that for some years it was not able to make so great an effort. The late king of France, in time of war, kept in pay above 400,000 men [1]; though, from Mazarine's death to his own, he was engaged in a course of wars that lasted near thirty years.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge inseparable from ages of art and refinement; as, on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture. Can we expect, that a government will be well-modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning-wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage! Not to mention, that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

[1] The inscription on the Place-Vendome says 440,000.

Digitized by Google

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and make the return to submission impracticable, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance. Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle, where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

Nor need we fear, that men, by losing their ferocity, will lose their martial spirit, or become less undaunted and vigorous in defence of their country or their liberty. The arts have no such effect in enervating either the mind or body. On the contrary, industry, their inseparable attendant, adds new force to both. And if anger, which is said to be the whetstone of courage, loses somewhat of its asperity by politeness and refinement, a sense of honour, which is a stronger, more constant, and more governable principle, acquires fresh vigour by that elevation of genius which arises from knowledge and a good education. Add to this, that courage can neither

Digitized by Google

have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people. The ancients remarked, that Datames was the only barbarian that ever knew the art of war. And Pyrrhus, seeing the Romans marshal their army with some art and skill, said with surprise: *These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline!* It is observable, that, as the old Romans, by applying themselves solely to war, were almost the only uncivilized people that ever possessed military discipline; so the modern Italians are the only civilized people, among Europeans, that ever wanted courage and a martial spirit. Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the Italians to their luxury, or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the French and English, whose bravery is as uncontestable, as their love for the arts, and their assiduity in commerce. The Italian historians give us a more satisfactory reason for this degeneracy of their countrymen. They show us how the sword was dropped at once by all the Italian sovereigns; while the Venetian aristocracy was jealous of its subjects, the Florentine democracy applied itself entirely to commerce; Rome was governed by priests, and Naples by women. War then became the business of soldiers of fortune, who spared one another, and, to the astonishment of the world, could engage a whole day in what they called a battle, and return at night to their camp, without the least bloodshed.

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to

Digitized by Google

declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient Rome, which, joining to its poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprising height of grandeur and liberty; but, having learned from its conquered provinces the Asiatic luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; whence arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the Latin classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East: insomuch that Sallust represents a taste for painting as a vice, no less than lewdness and drinking. And so popular were these sentiments, during the later ages of the republic, that this author abounds in praises of the old rigid Roman virtue, though himself the most egregious instance of modern luxury and corruption; speaks contemptuously of the Grecian eloquence, though the most elegant writer in the world; nay, employs preposterous digressions and declamations to this purpose, though a model of taste and correctness.

But it would be easy to prove, that these writers mistook the cause of the disorders in the Roman state, and ascribed to luxury and the arts what really proceeded from an ill-modelled government, and the unlimited extent of conquests. Refinement on the pleasures and conveniencies of life has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption. The value which all men put upon any particular pleasure depends on comparison and experience;

Digitized by Google

nor is a porter less greedy of money, which he spends on bacon and brandy, than a courtier, who purchases champagne and ortolans. Riches are valuable at all times, and to all men, because they always purchase pleasures, such as men are accustomed to, and desire: nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money, but a sense of honour and virtue, which, if it be not nearly equal at all times, will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement.

Of all European kingdoms, Poland seems the most defective in the arts of war as well as peace, mechanical as well as liberal; yet it is there that venality and corruption do most prevail. The nobles seem to have preserved their crown elective for *no* other purpose than regularly to sell it to *the highest* bidder. This is almost the only species of commerce, with which that people are acquainted.

The liberties of England, so far from decaying since the improvements in the arts, have never flourished so much as during that period. And though corruption may seem to increase of late years, this is chiefly to be ascribed to our established liberty, when our princes have found the impossibility of governing without parliaments, or of terrifying parliaments by the phantom of prerogative. Not to mention, that this corruption or venality prevails much more among the electors than the elected, and therefore cannot justly be ascribed to any refinements in luxury.

If we consider the matter in a proper light, we

shall find, that a progress in the arts is rather favourable to liberty, and has a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. In rude unpolished nations, where the arts are neglected, all labour is bestowed on the cultivation of the ground; and the whole society is divided into two classes, proprietors of land, and their vassals or tenants. The latter are *necessarily* dependent, and fitted for *slavery and subjection*; especially where they possess no riches, and are not valued for their knowledge in agriculture, as must always be the case where the arts are neglected. The former naturally erect themselves into petty tyrants, and must either submit to an absolute master, for the sake of peace and order, or if they will preserve their independency, like the ancient barons, they must fall into feuds and contests among themselves, and throw the whole society into such confusion, as is perharps worse than the most despotic government. But where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent: while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may secure their property,

Digitized by Google

and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.

The Lower House is the support of our popular government; and all the world acknowledges, that it owed its chief influence and consideration to the increase of commerce, which threw such a balance of property into the hands of the commons. How inconsistent then is it to blame so violently a refinement in the arts, and to represent it as the bane of liberty and public spirit!

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature: and as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgments pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is that at present we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived by comparing different nations that are contemporaries where we both judge more impartially, and can better set in opposition those manners, with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized ages, and, by the refined Greeks and Romans, were ascribed to all the barbarous nations which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors, so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtue, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An ancient Franc or Saxon may be highly extolled, but I

Digitized by Google

believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a Moor or Tartar, than in those of a French or English gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

We come now to the *second* position which we proposed to illustrate, to wit, that, as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and *conveniencies* of life, is advantageous to the *public, so* wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it *also* ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though, perhaps, not the most pernicious, to political society.

Let us consider what we call vicious luxury. No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A gratification is only vicious when it engrosses all a man's expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune. Suppose that he correct the vice, and employ part of his expence in the education of his children, in the support of his friends, and in relieving the poor, would any prejudice result to society? On the contrary, the same consumption would arise, and that labour, which, at present, is employed only in producing a slender gratification to one man, would relieve the necessitous, and bestow satisfaction on hundreds. The same care and toil that raise a dish of peas at Christmas would give bread to a whole family during six months. To say, that, without a vicious luxury, the labour would not have been

Digitized by Google

employed at all, is only to say, that there is some other defect in human nature, such as indolence, selfishness, inattention to others, for which luxury, in some measure, provides a remedy; as one poison may be an antidote to another. But virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected.

Suppose the same number of men that are at present in Great Britain, with the same soil and climate, I ask, is it not possible for them to be happier, by the most perfect way of life that can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation that Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition? To assert, that they cannot, appears evidently ridiculous. As the land is able to maintain more than all its present inhabitants, they could never, in such a *Utopian* state, feel any other ills than those which arise from bodily sickness: and these are not the half of human miseries. All other ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow. You must only take care to remove all the vices. If you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing *vicious* luxury, without curing sloth and an indifference to others, you only diminish industry in the state, and add nothing to men's charity or their generosity. Let us, therefore, rest contented with asserting, that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone; but let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an

Digitized by Google

author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public [1]! And indeed it seems, upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.

I thought this reasoning necessary, in order to give some light to a philosophical question, *which* has been much disputed in England. *I call it a philosophical* question, not a *political* one. For whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice; this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice *by* another; and, in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society. Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills, but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more hurtful both to private persons and to the public. When sloth reigns, a mean uncultivated way of life prevails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment. And if the sovereign, in such a situation, demands the service of his subjects, the labour of the state suffices only to furnish the necessaries of life to the labourers, and can afford nothing to those who are employed in the public service.

[1] Fable of the Bees.

Digitized by Google

ESSAY V.

ON SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT IN WRITING.

FINE writing, according to Mr. Addison, consists of sentiments, which are natural, without being obvious. There cannot be a juster, and more concise definition of fine writing.

Sentiments, which are merely natural, affect not the mind with any pleasure, and seem not worthy of our attention. The pleasantries of a waterman, the observations of a peasant, the ribaldry of a porter or hackney coachman, all of these are natural and disagreeable. What an insipid comedy should we make of the chit-chat of the tea-table, copied faithfully and at full length! Nothing can please persons of taste, but nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, *la belle nature;* or if we copy low life, the strokes must be strong and remarkable, and must convey a lively image to the mind. The absurd *naïveté* of *Sancho Panza* is represented in such inimitable colours by Cervantes, that it entertains as much as the picture of the most magnanimous hero or softest lover.

The case is the same with orators, philosophers, critics, or any author who speaks in his own person, without introducing other speakers or actors. If his language be not elegant, his observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct, but he never will be agreeable. It is the

unhappiness of such authors, that they are never blamed or censured. The good fortune of a book, and that of a man, are not the same. The secret deceiving path of life, which Horace talks of, *fallentis semita vitæ*, may be the happiest lot of the one; but is the greatest misfortune, which the other can possibly fall into.

On the other hand, productions, which are merely surprising, without being natural, *can never* give any lasting entertainment to the *mind*. To draw chimeras is not, properly speaking, to copy or imitate. The justness of the representation is lost, and the mind is displeased to find a picture which bears no resemblance to any original. Nor are such excessive refinements more agreeable in the epistolary or philosophic style, than in the epic or tragic. Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production. Uncommon expressions, *strong* flashes of wit, pointed similes, and epigrammatic turns, especially when they recur too frequently, are a disfigurement, rather than any embellishment of discourse. As the eye, in surveying a Gothic building, is distracted by the multiplicity of ornaments, and loses the whole by its minute attention to the parts, so the mind, in perusing a work overstocked with wit, is fatigued and disgusted with the constant endeavour to shine and surprise. This is the case where a writer overabounds in *wit*, even though that wit, in itself, should be just and agreeable. But it commonly happens to such writers, that they seek for their favourite ornaments even where the subject does not afford them, and,

Digitized by Google

by that means, have twenty insipid conceits for one thought which is really beautiful.

There is no subject in critical learning more copious than this of the just mixture of simplicity and refinement in writing; and therefore, not to wander in too large a field, I shall confine myself to a few general observations on that head.

First, I observe, *That though excesses of both kinds are to be avoided, and though a proper medium ought to be studied in all productions, yet this medium lies not in a point, but admits of a considerable latitude.* Consider the wide distance, in this respect, between Mr. Pope and Lucretius. These seem to lie in the two greatest extremes of refinement and simplicity, in which a poet can indulge himself, without being guilty of any blameable excess. All this interval may be filled with poets who may differ from each other, but may be equally admirable, each in his peculiar style and manner. Corneille and Congreve, who carry their wit and refinement somewhat farther than Mr. Pope (if poets of so different a kind can be compared together), and Sophocles and Terence, who are more simple than Lucretius, seem to have gone out of that medium, in which the most perfect productions are found, and to be guilty of some excess in these opposite characters. Of all the great poets, Virgil, and Racine, in my opinion, lie nearest the centre, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities.

My *second* observation on this head is, *That it is very difficult, if not impossible, to explain by*

Digitized by Google

words, where the just medium lies between the excesses of simplicity and refinement, or to give any rule by which we can know precisely the bounds between the fault and the beauty. A critic may not only discourse very judiciously on this head, without instructing his readers, but even without understanding the matter perfectly himself. There is not a finer piece of criticism than the *Dissertation on Pastorals* by Fontenelle, in which, by a number of reflections and philosophical reasonings, he endeavours to fix the just medium, which is suitable to that species of writing. But let any one read the pastorals of that author, and he will be convinced, that this judicious critic, notwithstanding his fine reasonings, had a false taste, and fixed the point of perfection much nearer the extreme of refinement than pastoral poetry will admit of. The sentiments of his shepherds are better suited to the toilettes of Paris, than to the forests of Arcadia. But this it is impossible to discover from his critical reasonings. He blames all excessive painting and ornament as much as Virgil could have done, had that great poet written a dissertation on this species of poetry. However different the tastes of men, their general discourse on these subjects is commonly the same. No criticism can be instructive, which descends not to particulars, and is not full of examples and illustrations. It is allowed on all hands, that beauty, as well as virtue, always lies in a medium; but where this medium is placed, is a great question, and can never be sufficiently explained by general reasonings.

Digitized by Google

I shall deliver it as a *third* observation on this ıbject, *That we ought to be more on our guard against* ıe *excess of refinement than that of simplicity; and* hat *because the former excess is both less* beautiful, ınd *more* dangerous *than the latter.*

It is a certain rule, that wit and passions are ntirely incompatible. When the affections are moved, there is no place for the imagination. The mind of man being naturally limited, it is impossible that all its faculties can operate at once: and the more any one predominates, the less room is there for the others to exert their vigour. For this reason, a greater degree of simplicity is required in all compositions, where men, and actions, and passions are painted, than in such as consist of *reflexions* and observations. And as the former *species* of writing is the more engaging and beau*tiful*, one may safely, upon this account, give the preference to the extreme of simplicity above that of refinement

We may also observe, that those compositions, which we read the oftenest, and which every man of taste has got by heart, have the recommendation of simplicity, and have nothing surprising in the thought, when divested of that elegance of expression, and harmony of numbers, with which it is *clothed*. If the merit of the composition lie in a point of wit, it may strike at first; but the mind anticipates the thought in the second perusal, and is no longer affected by it. When I read an epigram of Martial, the first line recalls the whole, and I have no pleasure in repeating to myself what

Digitized by Google

I know already. But each line, each word in Catullus, has its merit, and I am never tired with the perusal of him. It is sufficient to run over Cowley once: but Parnell, after the fiftieth reading, is as fresh as at the first. Besides, it is with books as with women, where a certain plainness of manner and of dress is more engaging, than that glare of paint, and airs and apparel, which may *dazzle the* eye, but reaches not the affections. *Terence is* a modest and bashful beauty, to whom we grant every thing, because he assumes nothing, and whose purity and nature make a durable, though not a violent impression on us.

But refinement, as it is the less *beautiful*, so it is the more *dangerous* extreme, and what we are the aptest to fall into. Simplicity passes for dullness, when it is not accompanied with great elegance and propriety. On the contrary, there is something surprising in a blaze of wit and conceit. Ordinary readers are mightily struck with it, and falsely imagine it to be the most difficult, as well as the most excellent way of writing. Seneca abounds with agreeable faults, says Quintilian, *abundat dulcibus vitiis*, and for that reason is the more dangerous, and the more apt to pervert the taste of the young and inconsiderate.

I shall add, that the excess of refinement is now more to be guarded against than ever, because it is the extreme, which men are the most apt to fall into, after learning has made some progress, and after eminent writers have appeared in every species of composition. The endeavour to please by

Digitized by Google

velty leads men wide of simplicity and nature, it fills their writings with affectation and conceit. It was thus the Asiatic eloquence degenerated so much from the Attic; it was thus the age of Claudius and Nero became so much inferior to that of Augustus in taste and genius; and perhaps there are, at present, some symptoms of a like degeneracy of taste in France as well as in England.

ESSAY VI.

ON ELOQUENCE.

THOSE who consider the periods and revolutions of human kind, as represented in history, are entertained with a spectacle full of pleasure and variety, and see, with surprise, the manners, customs, and opinions of the same species susceptible of such prodigious changes in different periods of time. It may, however, be observed, that, in *civil* history, there is found a much greater uniformity than in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negociations, and politics of one age, resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles. Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions; and these passions are of a very stubborn and intractable nature, in comparison of the sentiments and understanding, which are easily varied by education

Digitized by Google

and example. The Goths were much more inferior to the Romans in taste and science than in courage and virtue.

But not to compare together nations so widely different, it may be observed, that even this later period of human learning is, in many respects, of an opposite character to the ancient; and that, if we be superior in philosophy, we are *still, notwithstanding* all our refinements, *much inferior* in eloquence.

In ancient times, no work of genius was thought to require so great parts and capacity as speaking in public; and some eminent writers have pronounced the talents, even of a great poet or philosopher, to be of an inferior nature to those which are requisite for such an undertaking. Greece and Rome produced, each of them, but one accomplished orator; and whatever praises the other celebrated speakers might merit, they were still esteemed much inferior to these great models of eloquence. It is observable, that the ancient critics could scarcely find two orators in any age, who deserved to be placed precisely in the same rank, and possessed the same degree of merit. Calvus, Cælius, Curio, Hortensius, Cæsar, rose one above another; but the greatest of that age was inferior to Cicero, the most eloquent speaker that had ever appeared in Rome. Those of fine taste, however, pronounced this judgment of the Roman orator, as well as of the Grecian, that both of them surpassed in eloquence all that had ever appeared, but that they were far from reaching the perfection

Digitized by Google

of their art, which was infinite, and not only exceeded human force to attain, but human imagination to conceive. Cicero declares himself dissatisfied with his own performances; nay, even with those of Demosthenes: *Ita sunt avidæ et capaces meæ aures,* says he, *et semper aliquid immensum infinitumque desiderant.*

Of all the polite and learned nations, England alone possesses a popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. But what has England to boast of in this particular! In enumerating the great men who have done honour to our country, we exult in our poets and philosophers; but what orators are ever mentioned! or where are the monuments of their genius to be met with! There are found, indeed, in our histories, the names of several who directed the resolutions of our parliament, but neither themselves nor others have taken the pains to preserve their speeches; and the authority which they possessed, seems to have been owing to their experience, wisdom, or power, more than to their talents for oratory. At present, there are above half a dozen speakers in the two houses, who, in the judgment of the public, have reached very near the same pitch of eloquence; and no man pretends to give any one the preference above the rest. This seems to me a certain proof, that none of them have attained much beyond a mediocrity in their art, and that the species of eloquence, which they aspire to, gives no exercise to the

Digitized by Google

sublimer faculties of the mind, but may be reached by ordinary talents and slight application. A hundred cabinet-makers in London can work a table or a chair equally well, but no one poet can write verses with such spirit and elegance as Mr. Pope.

We are told, that, when Demosthenes was to plead, all ingenious men flocked to Athens from the most remote parts of Greece, as to the most celebrated spectacle of the world [1]. At London you may see men sauntering in the court of requests, while the most important debate is carrying on in the two houses; and many do not think themselves sufficiently compensated for the losing of their dinners by all the eloquence of our most celebrated speakers. When old Cibber is to act, the curiosity of several is more excited than when our prime minister is to defend himself from a motion for his removal or impeachment.

Even a person, unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge, from a few strokes, that the style or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to. How absurd would it appear, in our temperate and calm speakers, to make use of an *apostrophe*, like that noble one of Demosthenes, so much celebrated by Quintilian and

[1] *Ne illud quidem intelligunt, non modò ita memoriæ proditum esse, sed ita necesse fuisse, cùm Demosthenes dicturus esset, ut concursus, audiendi causâ, ex tota Græcia fierent. At cùm isti Attici dicunt, non modò à corona (quod est ipsum miserabile), sed etiam ab advocatis relinquuntur.* CICERO, de Claris Oratoribus.

Digitized by Google

Longinus, when, justifying the unsuccessful battle of Chæronea, he breaks out: *No, my fellow-citizens, no, you have not erred! I swear by the* manes *of those heroes, who fought for the same cause in the plains of* Marathon *and* Platæa — Who could now endure such a bold and poetical figure, as that which Cicero employs, after describing in the most tragical terms the crucifixion of a Roman citizen! *Should I paint the horrors of this scene, not to* Roman *citizens, not to the allies of our state, not to those who have ever heard of the* Roman *name, not even to men, but to brute-creatures; or, to go farther, should I lift up my voice in the most desolate solitude to the rocks and mountains, yet should I surely see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action*[1]— With what a blaze of eloquence must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace, or cause it to make any impression on the hearers, and what noble art and sublime talents are requisite to arrive, by just degrees, at a sentiment so bold and excessive; to inflame the audience so as to make them accompany the speaker in such violent passions, and such elevated

[1] The original is: *Quòd si hæc non ad cives Romanos, non ad aliquos amicos nostræ civitatis, non ad eos qui populi Romani nomen audissent, denique si non ad homines, verùm ad bestias; aut etiam, ut longiùs progrediar, si in aliquâ desertissimâ solitudine ad saxa et ad scopulos hæc conqueri et deplorare vellem, tamen omnia muta atque inanima tantâ in tam indignâ rerum atrocitate commoverentur.*

CIC. in Verr.

Digitized by Google

conceptions, and to conceal under a torrent of eloquence the artifice by which all this is effectuated! Should this sentiment even appear to us excessive, as perhaps it justly may, it will at least serve to give an idea of the style of ancient eloquence, where such swelling expressions were not rejected as wholly monstrous and gigantic.

Suitable to this vehemence of thought and expression was the vehemence of action observed in the ancient orators. The *supplosio pedis*, or stamping with the foot, was one of the most usual and moderate gestures which they made use of[1]; though that is now esteemed too violent, either for the senate, bar, or pulpit, and is only admitted into the theatre, to accompany the most violent passions, which are there represented.

One is somewhat at a loss to what cause we may ascribe so sensible a decline of eloquence in later ages. The genius of mankind, at all times, is, perhaps, equal: the moderns have applied themselves, with great industry and success, to all the other arts and sciences; and a learned nation possesses a popular government; a circumstance which seems requisite for the full display of these noble talents: but, notwithstanding all these advantages, our progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable in

[1] *Ubi dolor! ubi ardor animi, qui etiam ex infantium ingeniis elicere voces et querelas solet! Nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis: frons non percussa, non femur; pedis* (quod minimum est) *nulla supplosio. Itaque tantum abfuit ut inflammares nostros animos, somnum isto loco vix tenebamus.*
CICERO, de Claris Oratoribus.

Digitized by Google

comparison of the advances which we have made in all other parts of learning.

Shall we assert, that the strains of ancient eloquence are unsuitable to our age, and ought not to be imitated by modern orators! Whatever reasons may be made use of to prove this, I am persuaded they will be found, upon examination, to be unsound and unsatisfactory.

First. It may be said, that, in ancient times, during the flourishing period of Greek and Roman learning, the municipal laws, in every state, were but few and simple, and the decision of causes was in a great measure, left to the equity and common sense of the judges. The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and incompatible with every other study or profession. The great statesmen and generals among the Romans were all lawyers; and Cicero, to show the facility of acquiring this science, declares, that in the midst of all his occupations, he would undertake, in a few days, to make himself a complete civilian. Now, where a pleader addresses himself to the equity of his judges, he has much more room to display his eloquence, than where he must draw his arguments from strict laws, statutes, and precedents. In the former case, many circumstances must be taken in; many personal considerations regarded; and even favour and inclination, which it belongs to the orator, by his art and eloquence, to conciliate, may be disguised under the appearance of equity. But how shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome

occupations, in order to gather the flowers of Parnassus! or what opportunity shall he have of displaying them amidst the rigid and subtle arguments, objections, and replies, which he is obliged to make use of! The greatest genius, and greatest orator, who should pretend to plead before the *Chancellor*, after a month's study of the laws, would only labour to make himself ridiculous.

I am ready to own, that this circumstance of the multiplicity and intricacy of laws is a discouragement to eloquence in modern times: but I assert, that it will not entirely account for the decline of that noble art. It may banish oratory from Westminster-hall, but not from either house of Parliament. Among the Athenians, the Areopagites expressly forbade all allurements of eloquence; and some have pretended that in the Greek orations, written in the *judiciary* form, there is not so *bold* and rhetorical a style as appears in the Roman. But to what a pitch did the Athenians carry their eloquence in the *deliberative* kind, when affairs of state were canvassed, and the liberty, happiness, and honour of the republic were the subject of debate! Disputes of this nature elevate the genius above all others, and give the fullest scope to eloquence; and such disputes are very frequent in this nation.

Secondly. It may be pretended that the *decline* of eloquence is owing to the superior *good sense of* the moderns, who reject with disdain all those rhetorical tricks, employed to seduce the judges, and will admit of nothing but solid argument in any debate of deliberation. If a man be accused of

Digitized by Google

murder, the fact must be proved by witnesses and evidence, and the laws will afterwards determine the punishment of the criminal. It would be ridiculous to describe, in strong colours, the horror and cruelty of the action; to introduce the relations of the dead, and, at a signal, make them throw themselves at the feet of the judges, imploring justice with tears and lamentations: and still more ridiculous would it be to employ a picture representing the bloody deed, in order to move the judges by the display of so tragical a spectacle, though we know, that this artifice was sometimes practised by the pleaders of old [1]. Now, banish the pathetic from public discourses, and you reduce the speakers merely to modern eloquence, that is, to good sense, delivered in proper expression.

Perhaps it may be acknowledged, that our *modern* customs, or our superior good sense, if you will, should make our orators more cautious and reserved than the ancient in attempting to inflame the passions, or elevate the imagination of their audience; but I see no reason why it should make them despair absolutely of succeeding in that attempt. It should make them redouble their art, not abandon it entirely. The ancient orators seem also to have been on their guard against this jealousy of their audience; but they took a different way of eluding it [2]. They hurried away with such a torrent of sublime and pathetic, that they left

[1] QUINTIL. *lib. VI, cap. I.*
[2] LONGINUS, *cap. 15.*

Digitized by Google

their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice, by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow, and then communicated those impetuous movements to his audience.

Does any man pretend to have more *good sense* than Julius Cæsar! yet that haughty *conqueror*, we know, was so subdued by the charms of Cicero's eloquence, that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn.

Some objections, I own, notwithstanding his vast success, may lie against some passages of the Roman orator. He is too florid and rhetorical; his figures are too striking and palpable; the *divisions* of his discourse are drawn chiefly from the rules of the schools; and his wit disdains not always the artifice even of a pun, rhyme or jingle of words. The Grecian addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the Roman senate or judges; the lowest vulgar of Athens were his sovereigns, and the arbiters of his eloquence [1]: yet is his manner more chaste and austere than that of

[1] The orators formed the taste of the Athenian *people*, not the people of the orators. Gorgias Leontinus was very taking with them, till they became acquainted with a better manner. His figures of speech, says Diodorus Siculus, his antithesis, his ἰσώκολος, his ὁμοιοτέλευτον, which are now despised, had a great effect upon the

Digitized by Google

other. Could it be copied, its success would infallible over a modern assembly. It is rapid rmony, exactly adjusted to the sense; it is vehent reasoning, without any appearance of art; it disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a ntinued stream of argument; and of all human oductions, the orations of Demosthenes present us the models which approach the nearest to erfection.

Thirdly. It may be pretended, that the disorders of the ancient governments, and the enormous crimes, of which the citizens were often guilty, afforded much ampler matter for eloquence than can be met with among the moderns. Were there no Verres or Cataline, there would be no Cicero. But that this reason can have no great influence, is evident. It would be easy to find a Philip in modern times; but where shall we find a Demosthenes!

What remains then, but that we lay the blame on the want of genius, or of judgment in our speakers, who either find themselves incapable of reaching the heights of ancient eloquence, or reject all such endeavours as unsuitable to the spirit of modern assemblies! A few successful attempts of this nature might rouse the genius of

audience. Lib. XII, page 106, *ex editione Rhod.* It is in vain therefore for modern orators to plead the taste of their hearers as an apology for their lame performances. It would be a strange prejudice in favour of antiquity not to allow a British parliament to be naturally superior in judgment and delicacy to an Athenian mob.

Digitized by Google

the nation, excite the emulation of the youth, and accustom our ears to a more sublime and more pathetic elocution than what we have been hitherto entertained with. There is certainly something accidental in the first rise and progress of the arts in any nation. I doubt whether a very satisfactory reason can be given, why *ancient Rome*, though it received all its refinements from *Greece*, could attain only to a relish for statuary, painting, and architecture, without reaching the practice of these arts; while modern Rome has been excited by a few remains found among the ruins of antiquity, and has produced artists of the greatest eminence and distinction. Had such a cultivated genius for oratory, as Waller's for poetry, arisen, during the civil wars, when liberty began to be fully established, and popular assemblies *to enter* into all the most material points of government, I am persuaded so illustrious an example would have given a quite different turn to British eloquence, and made us reach the perfection of the ancient model. Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets, geometers, and philosophers, and British Ciceros have appeared, as well as British Archimedeses and Virgils.

It is seldom or never found, when a *false taste in* poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been preferred to a true upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models, to lead men into a juster

Digitized by Google

prehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When these appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and by their natural and powerful charms gain over even the most prejudiced to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion and of every sentiment are in every man; and when touched properly, they rise to life and warm the heart, and convey that satisfaction by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And if this observation be true with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so with regard to eloquence, which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges but must submit to the public verdict without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent speaker may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective, yet, whenever the true genius arises, *he* draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now, to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational; and, if properly executed, will always

Digitized by Google

have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of any thing better: but the ancients had experience of both; and, upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I mistake not, our modern eloquence is of the same style or species with that which ancient critics denominated Attic eloquence, that is, calm, elegant, and subtile, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common discourse. Such was the eloquence of Lysias among the Athenians, and of Calvus among the Romans. These were esteemed in their time; but, when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance, and subtility and force of argument with the former; but what rendered them chiefly admirable was that pathetic and sublime which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolution of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarcely had any instance in England, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances, which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord Bolingbroke's productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy, which our orators

Digitized by Google

scarcely ever aim at; though it is evident, that such an elevated style has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. It is there seconded by the graces of voice and action: the movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience; and the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give a propriety to the strongest figures and expressions. It is true, there is a great prejudice against *set speeches;* and a man cannot escape ridicule, who repeats a discourse as a school-boy does his lesson, and takes no notice of any thing that has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity! A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse [1]. If any thing new occur, he may supply it from his invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same *impetus* or *force,* which it has acquired by its motion; as a vessel, once impelled by the

[1] The first of the Athenians, who composed and wrote his speeches, was Pericles, a man of business and a man of sense, if ever there was one. Πρῶτος γραπτὸν λόγον ἐν δικαστηρίῳ εἶπε, τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ σχεδιαζόντων. SUIDAS, in Περικλῆς.

Digitized by Google

oars, carries on its course for some time, when the original impulse is suspended.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, even though our modern orators should not elevate their style or aspire to a rivalship with the ancient, yet is there, in most of their speeches, a material defect, which they might correct without *departing* from that composed air of argument and *reasoning*, to which they limit their ambition. Their great affectation of extemporary discourses has made them reject all order and method, which seems so requisite to argument, and without which it is scarcely possible to produce an entire conviction on the mind. It is not, that one would recommend many divisions in a public discourse, unless the subject very evidently offer them, but it is easy, without this formality, to observe a method, and make that method conspicuous to the hearers, who will be infinitely pleased to see the arguments rise naturally from one another, and will retain a more thorough persuasion than can arise from the strongest reasons, which are thrown together in confusion.

ESSAY VII.

ON THE DELICACY OF TASTE AND *PASSION*.

SOME people are subject to a certain *delicacy* of *passion*, which makes them extremely sensible to all the accidents of life, and gives them a lively joy upon every prosperous event, as well as a

Digitized by Google

piercing grief when they meet with misfortunes and adversity. Favours and good offices easily engage their friendship, while the smallest injury provokes their resentment. Any honour or mark of distinction elevates them above measure, but they are as sensibly touched with contempt. People of this character have, no doubt, more lively enjoyments, as well as more pungent sorrows, than men of cool and sedate tempers: but, I believe, when every thing is balanced, there is no one who would not rather be of the latter character, were he entirely master of his own disposition. Good or ill fortune is very little at our disposal: and when a person, that has this sensibility of temper, meets with any misfortune, his sorrow or resentment takes entire possession of him, and deprives him of all relish in the common occurrences of life, the right enjoyment of which forms the chief part of our happiness. Great pleasures are much less frequent than great pains; so that a sensible temper must meet with fewer trials in the former way than in the latter. Not to mention, that men of such lively passions are apt to be transported beyond all bounds of prudence and discretion, and to take false steps in the conduct of life, which are often irretrievable.

There is a *delicacy* of *taste* observable in some men, which very much resembles this *delicacy* of *passion*, and produces the same sensibility to beauty and deformity of every kind, as that does to prosperity and adversity, obligations and injuries. When you present a poem or a picture to a man possessed of this talent, the delicacy of his feeling makes him

be sensibly touched with every part of it; nor are the masterly strokes perceived with more exquisite relish and satisfaction, than the negligences or absurdities with disgust and uneasiness. A polite and judicious conversation affords him the highest entertainment; rudeness or impertinence is as great a punishment to him. In short, delicacy of taste has the same effect as delicacy of passion: it enlarges the sphere both of our happiness and misery, and makes us sensible to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind.

I believe, however, every one will agree with me, that, notwithstanding this resemblance, delicacy of taste is as much to be desired and cultivated, as delicacy of passion is to be lamented and to be remedied, if possible. The good or ill accidents of life are very little at our disposal; but we are pretty much masters what books we shall read, what diversions we shall partake of, and what company we shall keep. Philosophers have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of every thing external. That degree of perfection is impossible to be *attained*, but every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself; and *that* is not to be *attained* so much by any other means as by this delicacy of sentiment. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem or a piece of reasoning than the most expensive luxury can afford.

Whatever connexion there may be originally

Digitized by Google

between these two species of delicacy, I am persuaded that nothing is so proper to cure us of this delicacy of passion, as the cultivating of that higher and more refined taste, which enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts. A greater or less relish for those obvious beauties which strike the senses depends entirely upon the greater or less sensibility of the temper: but, with regard to the sciences and liberal arts, a fine taste is, in some measure, the same with strong sense, or at least depends so much upon it that they are inseparable. In order to judge aright of a composition of genius, there are so many views to be taken in, so many circumstances to be compared, and such a knowledge of human nature requisite, that no man, who *is not* possessed of the soundest judgment, will ever make a tolerable critic in such performances: and this is a new reason for cultivating a relish in the liberal arts. Our judgment will strengthen by this exercise: we shall form juster notions of life: many *things*, which please or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our attention; and we shall lose by degrees that sensibility and delicacy of passion, which is so incommodious.

But perhaps I have gone too far in saying that a cultivated taste for the polite arts extinguishes the passions, and renders us indifferent to those objects, which are so fondly pursued by the rest of mankind. On farther reflection, I find, that it rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions, at the same time that it renders the mind

Digitized by Google

incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions.

— Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

For this, I think, there may be assigned two very natural reasons. In the *first* place, nothing is so improving to the temper as the study of the beauties, either of poetry, eloquence, music, or painting. They give a certain elegance of sentiment to which the rest of mankind are strangers. The emotions which they excite are soft and tender. They draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship.

In the *second* place, a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people, and making us indifferent to the company and conversation of the greater part of men. You will seldom find that mere men of the world, whatever strong sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing characters, or in marking those insensible differences and gradations, which make one man preferable to another. Any one, that has competent sense, is sufficient for their entertainment; they talk to him, of their pleasures and affairs, with the same frankness that they would to another; and finding many, who are fit to supply his place, they never feel any vacancy or want in his absence. But, to make use of the

Digitized by Google

allusion of a celebrated French[1] author, the judgment may be compared to a clock or a watch, where the most ordinary machine is sufficient to tell the hours, but the most elaborate alone can point out the minutes and seconds, and distinguish the smallest differences of time. One that has well digested his knowledge both of books and men has little enjoyment but in the company of a few select companions: he feels too sensibly how much all the rest of mankind fall short of the notions which he has entertained; and, his affections being thus confined within a narrow circle, no wonder he carries them further than if they were more general and undistinguished. The gaiety and frolic of a bottle companion improves with him into a solid friendship; and the ardours of a youthful appetite become an elegant passion.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE STANDARD OF TASTE.

THE great variety of taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowledge are able to remark a difference of taste in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government, and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those who

[1] *M.* FONTENELLE, *Pluralité des Mondes*, soirée 6.

can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprised at the great inconsistence and contrariety. We are apt to call *barbarous* whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension; but soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the *highest* arrogance and self-conceit are at last *startled, on observing* an equal assurance on all sides, and *scruples*, amidst such a contest of sentiments, to pronounce positively in its own favour.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless inquirer; so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language, which *import* blame, and others praise; and all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing, and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brillancy: but when critics come to *particulars*, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science the case is *opposite*: *the* difference among men is there oftener found to lie in generals than in particulars, and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explanation of the terms commonly ends the controversy; and the disputants are surprised to find, that they had been

Digitized by Google

quarrelling, while at bottom they agreed in their judgment.

Those who found morality on sentiment, more than on reason, are inclined to comprehend ethics under the former observation, and to maintain, that, in all questions which regard conduct and manners, the difference among men is really greater than at first sight it appears. It is indeed obvious, that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, veracity, and in blaming the opposite qualities. Even poets and other authors, whose compositions are chiefly calculated to please the imagination, are yet found, from Homer down to Fenelon, to inculcate the same moral precepts, and to bestow their applause and blame on the same virtues and vices. This great unanimity is usually ascribed to the influence of plain reason, which, in all these cases, maintains similar sentiments in all men, and prevents those controversies, to which the abstract sciences are so much exposed. So far as the unanimity is real, this account may be admitted as satisfactory: but we must also allow, that some part of the seeming harmony in morals may be accounted for from the very nature of language. The word *virtue*, with its equivalent in every tongue, implies praise, as that of *vice* does blame: and no one, without the most obvious and grossest impropriety, could affix reproach to a term, which in general acceptation is understood in a good sense, or bestow applause, where the idiom requires disapprobation. Homer's general precepts,

Google

where he delivers any such, will never be controverted; but it is obvious, that, when he draws particular pictures of manners, and represents heroism in Achilles and prudence in Ulysses, he intermixes a much greater degree of ferocity in the former, and of cunning and fraud in the latter, than Fenelon would admit of. The sage Ulysses *in the* Greek poet seems to delight in lies *and fictions,* and often employs them without any *necessity or* even advantage; but his more scrupulous son, in the French epic writer, exposes himself to the most imminent perils rather than depart from the most exact line of truth and veracity.

The admirers and followers of the Alcoran insist on the excellent moral precepts interspersed throughout that wild and absurd performance. But it is to be supposed, that the Arabic words, which *correspond to* the English, equity, justice, temperance, meekness, charity, were such as, from the constant use of that tongue, must always be taken in a good sense; and it would have argued the greatest ignorance, not of morals, but of language, to have mentioned them with any epithets, besides those of applause and approbation. But would we know whether the pretended prophet had really attained a just sentiment of morals! let us attend to his narration; and we shall soon find, that he bestows praise *on* such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge, bigotry, as are utterly incompatible with civilized society. No steady rule of right seems there to be attended to; and every action is blamed, or praised, so far only as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

Digitized by Google

The merit of delivering true general precepts in ethics is indeed very small. Whoever recommends any moral virtues, really does no more than is implied in the terms themselves. That people who invented the word *charity*, and used it in a good sense, inculcated more clearly and much more efficaciously the precept, *be charitable*, than any pretended legislator or prophet, who should insert such a *maxim* in his writings. Of all expressions, those, which, together with their other meaning, imply a degree either of blame or approbation, are the least liable to be perverted or mistaken.

It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.

There is a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it: but all determinations of the understanding are not right, because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only

Digitized by Google

difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right, because no sentiment represents what is really in the object: it only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being. *Beauty* is no quality in things themselves: it exists *merely* in the mind which contemplates them; *and each* mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an inquiry as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition *of the* organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter: and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental, as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind, is found, in one instance at least, to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

But though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense, there is certainly a species of common sense which opposes it, at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality

Digitized by Google

of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriff, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to the former authors, no one pays attention to such a *taste*; and we pronounce, without scruple, the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot; and while we admit it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

It is evident that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasoning *à priori*; or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they any thing but general observations concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry, and even of eloquence, are founded on falsehood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of terms from their natural meaning. To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it would produce a work, which,

Digitized by Google

by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry *can* never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions: they have possessed *other* beauties, which were conformable to just *criticism;* and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. Ariosto pleases, but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind; and however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: it would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish *such* circumstances to be faults, and would represent *them* as universally blameable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults; let the pleasure, which they produce, be ever so unexpected and unaccountable.

Digitized by Google

But though all the general rules of art are founded only on experience, and on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature, we must not imagine, that, on every occasion, the feelings of men will be conformable to these rules. Those finer emotions of the mind are of a very tender and delicate nature, and require the concurrence of many favourable circumstances to make them play with facility and exactness. according to their general and established principles. The least exterior hinderance to such small springs, or the least internal disorder, disturbs their motion, and confounds the operation of the whole machine. When we would make an experiment of this nature, and would try the force of any beauty or deformity, we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition, a perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object; if any of these circumstances be wanting, our experiment will be fallacious, and we shall be unable to judge of the catholic and universal beauty. The relation, which nature has placed between the form and the sentiment, will at least be more obscure; and it will require greater accuracy to trace and discern it. We shall be able to ascertain its influence, not so much from the operation of each particular beauty, as from the durable admiration, which attends those works that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy.

The same Homer, who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at

Digitized by Google

Paris and at London. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator, but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances: but when these obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy; and while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

It appears then, that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature there is

Digitized by Google

a sound and a defective state, and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty, in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give pleasure, it is not to be expected that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

One obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that *delicacy* of imagination, which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to: every one talks of it; and would reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this essay is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy, than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from

Digitized by Google

too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in Don Quixote.

"It is with good reason, says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: this is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead, which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it; and after mature reflection pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather, which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favour of the wine, but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end! On emptying the hogshead, there was found, at the bottom, an old key with a leathern thong tied to it."

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external, it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now, as these qualities may be found in a small degree, or may be mixed and confounded with each other, it often happens that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder in

Digitized by Google

which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine as to allow nothing to escape them, and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition, this we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use, being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases when presented singly and in a high degree; and if the same qualities, in a continued composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong, which justified the verdict of Sancho's kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges who had condemned them. Though the hogshead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid: but it would have been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every by-stander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged, the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when

Digitized by Google

we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove, that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence, he must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish in any composition or discourse.

It is acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ, and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavours; but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner a quick and acute perception of beauty and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste; nor can a man be satisfied with himself while he suspects, that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case, the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense or feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both to a man himself and to his friends; but a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality, because it is

Digitized by Google

the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to meet with approbation; and the best way of ascertaining it is to appeal to those models and principles, which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages.

But though there be naturally a wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothing tends further to increase and improve this talent than *practice* in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment, which attends them, is obscure and confused; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellencies of the performance, much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed, it is the utmost that can be expected; and even this judgment, a person, so unpractised, will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice: he not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear

Digitized by Google

and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects; and he discerns that very degree and kind of approbation or displeasure, which each part is naturally fitted to produce. The mist dissipates, which seemed formerly to hang over the object: the organ acquires greater perfection in its operations and can pronounce without danger of mistake concerning the merits of every performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired by the same means in the judging of it.

So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that, before we can give judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite, that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights with attention and deliberation. There is a flutter or hurry of thought which attends the first perusal of any piece, and which confounds the genuine sentiment of beauty. The relation of the parts is not discerned: the true characters of style are little distinguished: the several perfections and defects seem wrapped up in a species of confusion, and present themselves indistinctly to the imagination. Not to mention, that there is a species of beauty, which, as it is florid and superficial, pleases at first; but, being found incompatible with a just expression either of reason or passion, soon palls upon the taste, and is then rejected with disdain, at least rated at a much lower value.

It is impossible to continue in the practice of

Digitized by Google

contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form *comparisons* between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other. A man, who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty, is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person familiarized to superior beauties would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellence of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity; as the most finished object, with which we are acquainted, is naturally supposed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, and to be entitled to the highest applause. One accustomed to see and examine and weigh the several performances admired in different ages and nations, can alone rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius.

But to enable a critic the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into

Digitized by Google

his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination. We may observe that every work of art, in order to produce its due effects on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance. An orator addresses himself to a particular audience, and must have a regard to their particular genius, interests, opinions, passions, and prejudices; otherwise he hopes in vain to govern their resolutions, and inflame their affections. Should they even have entertained some prepossessions against him, however unreasonable, he must not overlook this disadvantage; but, before he enters upon the subject, must endeavour to conciliate their affection, and acquire their good graces. A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. In like manner, when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this situation, and, considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances. A person influenced by prejudice complies not with this condition, but obstinately maintains his natural position, without placing himself in that point of view, which the performance supposes. If the work be addressed to a person of a different

age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices, but, full of the manners of his own age and country, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated. If the work be executed for the public, he never sufficiently enlarges his comprehension, or forgets his interest as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgotten himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard, and of consequence loses all credit and authority.

It is well known, that, in all questions submitted to the understanding, prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: it is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiment of beauty. It belongs to *good sense* to check its influence in both cases: and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him, whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art

Digitized by Google

has also a certain end or purpose for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes. Besides every kind of composition, even the most poetical, is nothing but a chain of propositions and reasonings; not always, indeed, the justest and most exact, but still plausible and specious, however disguised by the colouring of the imagination. The persons introduced in tragedy and epic poetry must be represented as reasoning, and thinking, and concluding, and acting, suitably to their character and circumstances; and without judgment, as well as taste and invention, a poet can never hope to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Not to mention, that the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom or never happens that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man who has a just taste without a sound understanding.

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal,

Digitized by Google

and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men, yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means excite a sentiment which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: the finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practise perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the conjoint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, gives the true standard of taste and beauty.

Digitized by Google

But where are such critics to be found! by what marks are they to be known! how distinguish them from pretenders!—These questions are embarrassing, and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this essay, we have endeavoured to extricate ourselves.

But if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and inquiry: but that such a character is valuable and estimable will be agreed by all mankind. Where these doubts occur, men can do no more than in other disputable questions, which are submitted to the understanding: they must produce the best arguments that their invention suggests to them; they must acknowledge a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard. It is sufficient for our present purpose if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.

But in reality the difficulty of finding, even in particulars, the standard of taste, is not so great as it is represented. Though in speculation, we may readily avow a certain criterion in science, and

Digitized by Google

deny it in sentiment, the matter is found in practice to be much more hard to ascertain in the former case than in the latter. Theories of abstract philosophy, systems of profound theology, have prevailed during one age: in a successive period, these have been universally exploded; their absurdity has been detected: other theories and systems have supplied their place, which again gave place to their successors; and nothing has been experienced more liable to the revolutions of chance and fashion than these pretended decisions of science. The case is not the same with the beauties of eloquence and poetry. Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public applause which they maintain for ever. Aristotle, and Plato, and Epicurus, and Descartes, may successively yield to each other: but Terence and Virgil maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of Cicero has lost its credit: the vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration.

Though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding, and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing any fine stroke which is pointed out to them. Every

Digitized by Google

convert to the admiration of the real poet or orator is the cause of some new conversion; and though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment. Thus, though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err *in their* affection for a favourite epic or tragic author.

But notwithstanding all our endeavours to fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the discordant apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: where men vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion in the faculties may commonly be remarked, proceeding either from prejudice, from want of practice, or want of delicacy, and there is just reason for approving one taste, and condemning another: but where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other, in that case a certain degree of diversity in judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.

Digitized by Google

passions are warm, will be
with amorous and tender
ore advanced in years, who
nilosophical reflections con-
life and moderation of the
Ovid may be the favourite
y; and perhaps Tacitus at
e, in such cases, endeavour
nents of others, and divest
nsities, which are natural to
ourite author as we do our
ty of humour and disposi-
, sentiment or reflection;
st predominates in our tem-
ar sympathy with the writer

pleased with the sublime;
; a third with raillery. One
to blemishes, and is ex-
ectness; another has a more
s, and pardons twenty ab-
r one elevated or pathetic
man is entirely turned to-
nergy; that man is delighted
and harmonious expression.
one; ornament by another.
, odes, have each their parti-
rticular species of writing to
an error in a critic to con-
one species or style of
ll the rest. But it is almost
predilection for that which

Digitized by Google

suits our particular turn and disposition. Such
ferences are innocent and unavoidable, and
never reasonably be the object of dispute, beç
there is no standard by which they can be decic

For a like reason we are more pleased, in
course of our reading, with pictures and chara
that resemble objects which are found in *our* c
age or country, than with those which *describ*
different set of customs. It is not *without* so
effort that we reconcile ourselves to the simplici
of ancient manners, and behold princesses carryi
water from the spring, and kings and heroes dr
ing their own victuals. We may allow in gene
that the representation of such manners is no f
in the author, nor deformity in the piece; bu
are not so sensibly touched with them. For
reason, comedy is not easily transferred from
age or nation to another. A Frenchman or I
lishman is not pleased with the Andria of Tere
or Clitia of Machiavel, where the fine lady, t
whom all the play turns, never once appears to
spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes
tably to the reserved humour of the ancient Gr
and modern Italians. A man of learning and
flection can make allowance for these peculiar
of manners; but a common audience can n
divest themselves so far of their usual ideas a
sentiments, as to relish pictures which no wise
semble them.

But here there occurs a reflection, which m
perhaps, be useful in examining the celebrated
troversy concerning ancient and modern learn

Digitized by Google

where we often find the one side excusing any seeming absurdity in the ancients from the manners of the age, and the other refusing to admit this excuse, or at least admitting it only as an apology for the author, not for the performance. In my opinion, the proper boundaries in this subject have seldom been fixed between the contending parties. Where any innocent peculiarities of manners are represented, such as those above mentioned, they ought certainly to be admitted; and a man, who is shocked with them, gives an evident proof of false delicacy and refinement. The poet's *monument more durable than brass* must fall to the ground like common brick or clay, were men to make no allowance for the continual revolutions of manners and customs, and would admit of nothing but what was *suitable* to the prevailing fashion. Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors because of their ruffs and fardingales?—But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation, this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the ancient poets, even sometimes by Homer and the Greek tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives modern

Digitized by Google

authors an advantage over them. We are n
interested in the fortunes and sentiments of su
rough heroes: we are displeased to find the limi
of vice and virtue so much confounded: a
whatever indulgence we may give to the writer
account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail
ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear a
affection to characters which we plainly *discove*
to be blameable.

The case is not the same with moral principles
as with speculative opinions of any kind. These
are in continual flux and revolution. The son em
braces a different system from the father. Nay
there scarcely is any man, who can boast of gre
constancy and uniformity in this particular. Wha
ever speculative errors may be found in the poli
writings of any age or country, they detract b
little from the value of those compositions. The
needs but a certain turn of thought or imaginatio
to make us enter into all the opinions, which th
prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusio
derived from them; but a very violent effort
requisite to change our judgment of manners, a
excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love
hatred, different from those to which the mind fro
long custom has been familiarized. And where
man is confident of the rectitude of that *mora*
standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous o
it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his hea
for a moment in complaisance to any writer wha
soever.

Of all speculative errors, those which rega

Digitized by Google

usable in compositions of
itted to judge of the civi-
ple, or even of single per-
efinement of their theolo-
e good sense, that directs
rences of life, is not heark-
ters, which are supposed
above the cognizance of
ccount, all the absurdities
ology must be overlooked
d pretend to form a just
and our posterity, in their
indulgence to their fore-
inciples can ever be im-
poet, while they remain
e not such strong posses-
im under the imputation
Where that happens, they
of morality, and alter the
e and virtue. They are
es, according to the prin-
or are the prejudices and
ufficient to justify them.
man Catholic religion to
every other worship, and
ahometans, and heretics,
ath and vengeance. Such
re in reality very blame-
virtues by the zealots of
e represented in their tra-
a kind of divine heroism.
ed two very fine tragedies

Digitized by Google

of the French theatre, Polyeucte and Athalia; w
an intemperate zeal for particular modes of wo
is set off with all the pomp imaginable, and f
the predominant character of the heroes. " V
" is this!" says the sublime Joad to Josabet, fin
her in discourse with Mathan, the priest of B
" does the daughter of David speak to *this trai*
" Are you not afraid lest the earth *should op*
" and pour forth flames to devour *you both*,
" lest these holy walls should fall and crush you t
" gether! What is his purpose! Why comes th
" enemy of God hither to poison the air, which
" breathe, with his horrid presence!" Such sen
ments are received with great applause on the the
of Paris: but at London the spectators would
full as much pleased to hear Achilles tell Agam
non that he was a dog in his forehead, and a
in his heart; or Jupiter threaten Juno with a so
drubbing if she will not be quiet.

Religious principles are also a blemish in
polite composition when they rise up to supe
tion, and intrude themselves into every sentim
however remote from any connexion with religi
It is no excuse for the poet, that the customs of
country had burdened life with so many religi
ceremonies and observances, that no part of it
exempt from that yoke. It must for ever *be ri*
culous in Petrarch to compare his mistress, Lau
to Jesus Christ; nor is it less ridiculous in th
agreeable libertine, Boccace, very seriously to g
thanks to God Almighty and the ladies, for th
assistance in defending him against his enemies.

Digitized by Google

AY IX.

RKABLE CUSTOMS.

e remarkable customs in
ments, and shall conclude
general maxims in politics
with great caution; and
ordinary appearances are
the moral as well as in
e former, perhaps, we can
they happen, from springs
h every one has, within
on, the strongest assurance
is often fully as impossible
ore-hand, to foresee and

essential to every supreme
hich debates, that entire
be granted to every mem-
s or reasonings should be
way tend to illustrate the
n. One would conclude,
nce, that, after a motion
oted and approved by that
egislative power is lodged,
the motion must for ever
e trial or inquiry. But no
first sight, appear more
e must, at least, be secured
ion; and that nothing less
egislative assembly, in their

Digitized by Google

subsequent meetings, could make him accounta
for those motions and harangues, to which they h
before given their approbation. But these axio
however irrefragable they may appear, have
failed in the Athenian government, from cau
and principles too, which appear almost ine
table.

By the γραφὴ παρανόμων, or *indictment of ill*
gality (though it has not been remarked by anti
quaries or commentators), any man was tried an
punished in a common court of judicature for an
law which had passed upon his motion, in th
assembly of the people, if that law appeared to th
court unjust, or prejudicial to the public. Th
Demosthenes, finding that ship-money was levi
irregularly, and that the poor bore the same burd
as the rich in equipping the galleys, corrected t
inequality by a very useful law, which proportion
the expence to the revenue and income of ea
individual. He moved for this law in the asse
bly; he proved its advantages [1]; he convinced
people, the only legislature in Athens; the l
passed, and was carried into execution: yet w
he tried in a criminal court for that law, upon t
complaint of the rich, who resented the alterati
that he had introduced into the finances [2]. He w
indeed acquitted upon proving anew the usefulne
of his law.

Ctesiphon moved in the assembly of the peopl

[1] His harangue for it is still extant; περὶ Συμμορίας
[2] *Pro* CTESIPHONTE.

Digitized by Google

should be conferred on
zen affectionate and useful
the people, convinced of
onours: yet was Ctesiphon
ων. It was asserted, among
osthenes was not a good
o the commonwealth: and
pon to defend his friend,
lf; which he executed by
quence, that has ever since
ankind.

æronea, a law was passed
perides, giving liberty to
em in the troops [1]. On
he orator was afterwards
above mentioned, and de-
ther topics, by that stroke
and Longinus: *It was*
d for this law: it was the
s the battle of Chæronea.
henes abound with many
nature, and prove clearly,
ommonly practised.
cracy was such a tumul-
can scarcely form a notion
f the world. The whole

lecem oratorum. Demosthenes
of this law. *Contra* ARISTO-
that its purport was, to render
estore the privilege of bearing
n declared incapable. Perhaps
the same law.

Digitized by Google

collective body of the people voted in every law without any limitation of property, without any distinction of rank, without controul from any magistracy or senate [1]; and consequently without regard to order, justice, or prudence. The Athenians soon became sensible of the mischiefs attending this constitution: but, being averse to checking themselves by any rule or restriction, they resolved, at least, to check their demagogues or counsellors by the fear of future punishment and inquiry. They accordingly instituted this remarkable law; a law esteemed so essential to their form of government, that Æschines insists on it as a known truth, that, were it abolished or neglected, it were impossible for the democracy to subsist [2].

The people feared not any ill consequence to liberty from the authority of the criminal courts, because these were nothing but very numerous juries, chosen by lot from among the people; and they justly considered themselves as in a state of perpetual pupillage, where they had an authority

[1] The senate of the Bean was only a less numerous mob, chosen by lot from among the people; and their authority was not great.

[2] In CTESIPHONTEM. It is remarkable, that the first step, after the dissolution of the democracy by Critias and the thirty, was to annul the γραφὴ παρανόμων, as we learn from Demosthenes κατὰ Τιμοκράτους. The orator in this oration gives us the words of the law, establishing the γραφὴ παρανόμων, pag. 297, *ex edit. Aldi.* And he accounts for it from the same principles we here reason upon.

Digitized by Google

ıse of reason, not only to
ever had been determined,
ın for measures which they
uasion. The same law had
or the same reason.
een an usual practice in
ment of any law esteemed
, to prohibit for ever its
Thus the demagogue, who
evenues to the support of
ıade it criminal so much
al of this law [2]. Thus
w, not only to recall all
granted, but to deprive
of the power of granting
bills of attainder [4] were
fected one Athenian, with-
le commonwealth. These
ch the legislature vainly
for ever, proceeded from
people of their own levity

wheel, such as we observe
, is considered by Lord
rdity in politics: but what
ıal wheels, which govern

inem.
tocratem.
of wit and humour, *part. 3,*

the same political machine, without any mutual check, controul, or subordination, and yet preserve the greatest harmony and concord! To establish two distinct legislatures, each of which possesses full and absolute authority within itself, and stands in no need of the other's assistance, in order to give validity to its acts, this may appear, beforehand, altogether impracticable, as long as men are actuated by the passions of ambition, emulation, and avarice, which have hitherto been their chief governing principles. And should I assert, that the state I have in my eye was divided into two distinct factions, each of which predominated in a distinct legislature, and yet produced no clashing in these independent powers, the supposition may appear incredible. And if, to augment the paradox, I should affirm, that this disjointed, irregular government was the most active, triumphant, and illustrious commonwealth that ever yet appeared, I should certainly be told, that such a political chimera was as absurd as any vision of priests or poets. But there is no need for searching long in order to prove the reality of the foregoing suppositions, for this was actually the case with the Roman republic.

The legislative power was there lodged *in the comitia centuriata* and *comitia tributa*. In the former, it is well known, the people voted according to their *census*; so that when the first class was unanimous, though it contained not, perhaps, the hundredth part of the commonwealth, it determined the whole, and, with the authority of the senate,

Digitized by Google

ablished a law. In the latter, every vote was ual; and as the authority of the senate was t there requisite, the lower people entirely pre-iled, and gave law to the whole state. In all rty-divisions, at first between the Patricians and lebeians, afterwards between the Nobles and the eople, the interest of the aristocracy was predo-inant in the first legislature; that of the demo-acy in the second: the one could always destroy at the other had established: nay, the one, by sudden and unforeseen motion, might take the rt of the other, and totally annihilate its rival, a vote, which, from the nature of the constitu-on, had the full authority of a law. But no such ontest is observed in the history of Rome; no istance of a quarrel between these two legislatures, ough many between the parties that governed in ch. Whence arose this concord which may seem extraordinary!

The legislature established in Rome, by the au-ority of Servius Tullius, was the *comitia centu-ata*, which, after the expulsion of the kings, ren-ered the government, for some time, very aristo-atical. But the people, having numbers and force their side, and being elated with frequent con-ests and victories in their foreign wars, always evailed when pushed to extremity, and first ex-rted from the senate the magistracy of the tri-nes, and next the legislative power of the *comitia ibuta*. It then behoved the nobles to be more reful than ever not to provoke the people. For, side the force which the latter were always

Digitized by Google

possessed of, they had now got possession of leg
authority, and could instantly break in pieces a
order or institution which directly opposed them
By intrigue, by influence, by money, by combi
nation, and by the respect paid to their characte
the nobles might often prevail, and direct the whol
machine of government: but, had *they* openl
set their *comitia centuriata* in opposition *to th*
tributa, they had soon lost the advantage of tha
institution, together with their consuls, prætors
ediles, and all the magistrates elected by it. But
the *comitia tributa,* not having the same reason
for respecting the *centuriata,* frequently repealed
laws favourable to the aristocracy: they limite
the authority of the nobles, protected the peop
from oppression, and controuled the actions of t
senate and magistracy. The *centuriata* found it co
venient always to submit; and, though equal
authority, yet being inferior in power, durst nev
directly give any shock to the other legislatur
either by repealing its laws, or establishing law
which, it foresaw, would soon be repealed by

No instance is found of any opposition or strugg
between these *comitia,* except one slight attemp
of this kind, mentioned by Appian in the thir
book of his civil wars. Mark Anthony, resolvin
to deprive Decimus Brutus of the government o
Cisalpine Gaul, railed the *Forum,* and called one o
the *comitia,* in order to prevent the meeting of th
other, which had been ordered by the senate. B
affairs were then fallen into such confusion, and t
Roman constitution was so near its final dissolutio

at no inference can be drawn from such an pedient. This contest, besides, was founded ore on form than party. It was the senate who dered the *comitia tributa*, that they might obstruct ıe meeting of the *centuriata*, which, by the conitution, or at least forms of the government, ɔuld alone dispose of provinces.

Cicero was recalled by the *comitia centuriata*, ough banished by the *tributa*, that is, by a *plecitum*. But his banishment, we may observe, ver was considered as a legal deed, arising from e free choice and inclination of the people. It as always ascribed to the violence alone of Cloius, and to the disorders introduced by him into ıe government.

III. The *third* custom, which we purpose to mark, regards England; and though it be not important as those which we have pointed out Athens and Rome, is no less singular and ıexpected. It is a maxim in politics, which we adily admit as undisputed and universal, that a ɔwer, however great, when granted by law to an ıinent magistrate, is not so dangerous to liberty, an authority, however inconsiderable, which acquires from violence and usurpation. For, sides that the law always limits every power ıich it bestows, the very receiving it as a conssion establishes the authority whence it is de·ed, and preserves the harmony of the constitu·ɔn. By the same right that one prerogative is sumed without law, another may also be claimed, d another, with still greater facility; while the

Digitized by Google

first usurpations both serve as precedents to the following, and give force to maintain them. Hence the heroism of Hampden's conduct, who sustained the whole violence of royal prosecution, rather than pay a tax of twenty shillings, not imposed by parliament; hence the care of all English patriots to guard against the first encroachments of the crown; and hence alone the existence, at this day, of English liberty.

There is, however, one occasion, where the parliament has departed from this maxim, and that is, in the *pressing of seamen*. The exercise of an irregular power is here tacitly permitted in the crown; and though it has frequently been under deliberation, how that power might be rendered legal, and granted, under proper restrictions, to the sovereign, no safe expedient could ever be proposed for that purpose; and the danger to liberty always appeared greater from law than from usurpation. While this power is exercised to no other end than to man the navy, men willingly submit to it from a sense of its use and necessity; and the sailors, who are alone affected by it, find no body to support them, in claiming the rights and privileges, which the law grants, without distinction, to all English subjects. But were this power, on any occasion, made an instrument of faction or ministerial tyranny, the opposite faction, and indeed all lovers of their country, would immediately take the alarm, and support the injured party; the liberty of Englishmen would be asserted; juries would be implacable; and the tools of tyranny, acting both against law

Digitized by Google

meet with the severest ven-
er hand, were the parliament
thority, they would probably
e two inconveniencies : they
it under so many restrictions
se its effect by cramping the
n; or they would render it so
nsive as might give occasion
which we could, in that case,
e very irregularity of the prac-
ents its abuses, by affording
ainst them.

this reasoning, to exclude all
ng a register for seamen, which
without being dangerous to
e, that no satisfactory scheme
been proposed. Rather than
therto invented we continue
ne most absurd and unaccount
times of full internal peace
d against law. A continued
d in the crown, amidst the
watchfulness in the people;
those very principles, liberty,
ghest liberty, is left entirely to
out any countenance or pro-
e of nature is renewed in one
d societies of mankind : and
disorder are committed with
one party pleads obedience to
ate, the other the sanction of

Digitized by Google

ESSAY X.

ON QUALITIES USEFUL TO OURSELVES

PART I.

IT seems evident, that where a quality or hal subjected to our examination, if it appear, in respect, prejudicial to the person possessed of it such as incapacitates him for business and act it is instantly blame , and ranked among his f and imperfections. Indolence, negligence, wa order and method, obstinacy, fickleness, rash credulity; these qualities were never esteeme any one indifferent to a character, much less tolled as accomplishments or virtues. *The pr* dice, resulting from them, immediately strikes eye, and gives us the sentiment of pain and di probation.

No quality, it is allowed, is absolutely e blameable or praise-worthy. It is all accordi its degree. A due medium, say the Peripateti the characteristic of virtue; but this mediu chiefly determined by utility. A proper cel for instance, and dispatch in business, is comm able. When defective, no progress is ever in the execution of any purpose : when exces it engages us in precipitate and ill-concerted sures and enterprises. By such reasonings, w the proper and commendable mediocrity in moral and prudential disquisitions, and never view of the advantages, which result from *any* c racter or habit.

Now, as these advantages are enjoyed by the on possessed of the character, it can never be *love* which renders the prospect of them agreeable us the spectators, and prompts our esteem and probation. No force of imagination can convert into another person, and make us fancy, that we, *ing that* person, reap benefit from those valuable *alities*, which belong to him; or, if it did, no erity of imagination could immediately transport back into ourselves, and make us love and esteem person, as different from us. Views and sen-ients, so opposite to known truth, and to each ier, could never have place, at the same time, in e same person. All suspicion, therefore, of selfish gards is here totally excluded. It is a quite dif-ent principle which actuates our bosom, and *terests* us in the felicity of the person whom we ntemplate. Where his natural talents and ac-ired abilities give us the prospect of elevation, vancement, a figure in life, prosperous success, a ady command over fortune, and the execution great or advantageous undertakings, we are struck th such agreeable images, and feel a complacency d regard immediately arise towards him. The eas of happiness, joy, triumph, prosperity, are nnected with every circumstance of his character, d diffuse over our minds a pleasing sentiment of mpathy and humanity [1].

[1] One may venture to affirm, that there is no human eature, to whom the appearance of happiness (where vy or revenge has no place) does not give pleasure;

Digitized by Google

Let us suppose a person originally framed to have no manner of concern for his fellow-tures, but to regard the happiness and misery sensible beings with greater indifference than two contiguous shades of the same colour. I suppose, if the prosperity of nations *were lai* the one hand, and their ruin on *the other, an* were desired to chuse that he would stand, *like* schoolman's ass, irresolute and undetermined, tween equal motives; or rather, like the sam between two pieces of wood or marble, withou inclination or propensity to either side. The sequence, I believe, must be allowed just, that a person, being absolutely unconcerned, eith the public good of a community, or the *privat* lity of others, would look on every quality, hov

that of misery, uneasiness. This seems *inseparabl* our make and constitution. But they are only th generous minds, that are thence prompted to see lously the good of others, and to have a real passi their welfare. With men of narrow and unge spirits, this sympathy goes not beyond a slight of the imagination, which serves only to excite ments of complacency or censure, and makes them to the object either honourable or dishonourable a tions. A griping miser, for instance, praises ext *industry* and *frugality* even in others, and sets th his estimation, above all the other virtues. He the good that results from them, and feels that of happiness with a more lively sympathy, tha other you could represent to him; though *perha* would not part with a shilling to make the fortu he industrious man whom he praises so highly.

Digitized by Google

neficial to society or to
e indifference as on the
esting object.
cied monster, we suppose
or determination in the
in foundation of prefe-
se is equal; and however
his heart be selfish, or if-
emote from him, there
stinction between what
icious. Now this dis-
its parts, with the *moral*
n has been so often, and
after. The same en-
every circumstance, are
of morals and to that of
r is susceptible of high
nt and of the other; and
objects, by their nearer
s, enlivens the one and
of philosophy, therefore,
se sentiments are origi-
ach particular, even the
erned by the same laws,
objects.
er, with the greatest cer-
ept in its orbit by the
makes bodies fall near
ut because these effects
und similar and equal?
ent bring as strong con-
al disquisitions?

To prove, by any long detail, that all the q
ties, useful to the possessor, are approved of,
the contrary censured, would be superfluous.
least reflection on what is every day experie
in life will be sufficient. We shall only menti
few instances, in order to remove, *if possible*
doubt and hesitation.

The quality, the most necessary for the execut
of any useful enterprise, is DISCRETION, by wh
we carry on safe intercourse with others, give
attention to our own and to their character, w
each circumstance of the business which we un
take, and employ the surest and safest means fo
attainment of any end or purpose. To a Crom
perhaps, or a De Retz, discretion may appea
alderman-like virtue, as Dr. Swift calls it;
being incompatible with those vast designs, to wh
really, their courage and ambition prompted the
might, in them, be a fault or imperfection. But i
conduct of ordinary life no virtue is more requ
not only to obtain success, but to avoid the
fatal miscarriages and disappointments. The g
est parts without it, as observed by an elegant wr
may be fatal to their owner, as Polyphemus,
prived of his eye, was only the more exposed
account of his enormous strength and stature.

The best character, indeed, were *it not ra*
too perfect for human nature, is that which is
swayed by temper of any kind, but alterna
employs enterprise and caution, as each is *usefi*
the particular purpose intended. Such is the
cellence which St Evremond ascribes to Mares

Digitized by Google

very campaign, as he grew
his military enterprises;
experience, perfectly ac-
ent in war, he advanced
ecurity in a road so well
ays Machiavel, was cau-
: and both succeeded,
e Roman affairs, during
as peculiarly adapted to
d have failed, had these
He is happy, whose cir-
r; but he is more ex-
temper to any circum-

isplay the praises of IN-
advantages, in the acqui-
, or in raising what we
The tortoise, according
rance, gained the race of
of much superior swift-
en husbanded, is like a
few acres produce more
han extensive provinces,
nen over-run with weeds

cess in life, or even of
t fail where a reasonable
The heap, instead of
y, and leaves its possessor
as, not having been able
a large revenue, he will
ntentedly on a small one.

Google

The souls of men, according to Plato[1], infla with impure appetites, and losing the body, wh alone afforded means of satisfaction, hover al the earth, and haunt the places where their bo are deposited, possessed with a longing desir recover the lost organs of sensation. *So may* see worthless prodigals, having consumed *their f* tune in wild debauches, thrusting themselves *in* every plentiful table, and every party of pleasu hated even by the vicious, and despised even by foo

The one extreme of frugality is *avarice,* whi as it both deprives a man of all use of his riches, a checks hospitality and every social enjoyment justly censured on a double account. *Prodigal* the other extreme, is commonly more hurtful t man himself; and each of these extremes is blam above the other, according to the temper of person who censures, and according to his greate less sensibility to pleasure, either social or sensua

Qualities often derive their merit from com cated sources. *Honesty, fidelity, truth,* are prai for their immediate tendency to promote the in ests of society; but after those virtues are o established upon this foundation, they are also c sidered as advantageous to the person himself, as the source of that trust and confidence, wh can alone give a man any consideration *in h* One becomes contemptible, no less than odiou when he forgets the duty, which, in this particul he owes to himself as well as to society.

[1] *Plato.*

Digitized by Google

ation is one *chief* source of
thrown on any instance of
n point of *chastity*. The
n be acquired by that sex
delity; and a woman be-
ar, loses her rank, and is
, who is deficient in this
st failure is here sufficient
A female has so many op-
ndulging these appetites,
s security but her absolute
d where a breach is once
er be fully repaired. If a
rdice on one occasion, a
ates him in his character.
a woman, whose behaviour
, be able to assure us, that
olutions, and has self-com-
em into execution!

d, are equally desirous of
successful in the pursuit:
s the want of STRENGTH
enable them to resist the
ase or pleasure, and carry
rch of more distant profit
fections, on a general pros-
m certain rules of conduct,
f preference of one above
cisions, though really the
ions and propensities, (for
e any object eligible, or the
y a natural abuse of terms,

Google

to be the determination of pure *reason* and reflection. But when some of these *objects* approach nearer to us, or acquire the *advantages* of favorable lights and positions which *catch the heart* or imagination, our general *resolutions are frequently* confounded, a small enjoyment *preferred*, and lasting shame and sorrow entailed upon us. *And* however poets may employ their wit and *eloquence* in celebrating present pleasure, and rejecting all distant views to fame, health, or fortune; it is obvious that this practice is the source of all dissoluteness and disorder, repentance and misery. A man of a strong and determined temper adheres tenaciously to his general resolutions, and is neither seduced by the allurements of pleasure, nor terrified by the menaces of pain; but keeps still in view those distant pursuits, by which he, at once, ensures his happiness and his honour.

Self-satisfaction, at least in some degree, is an advantage, which equally attends the FOOL *and* the WISE MAN, but it is the only one; nor is there any other circumstance in the conduct of life where they are upon an equal footing. Business, books, conversation, for all of these a fool is totally incapacitated, and except condemned by his station to the coarsest drudgery, remains a *useless* burden upon the earth. Accordingly, it is found, *that men* are extremely jealous of their character in this particular; and many instances are seen of profligacy and treachery, the most avowed and unreserved; none of them bearing patiently the imputation of ignorance and stupidity. Dicæarchus, the Macedonian

Digitized by Google

us tells us[r], openly erected
nother to injustice, in order
kind; even he, I am well
rted at the epithet of *fool*,
evenge for so injurious an
e affection of parents, the
ssoluble bond in nature, no
sufficient to support the dis-
racter. Love itself, which
chery, ingratitude, malice,
diately extinguished by it,
nowledged; nor are defor-
tal to the dominion of that
re the ideas of an utter in-
se or undertaking, and of
conduct in life!

ether a quick or a slow ap-
uable! whether one, that,
far into a subject, but can
study, or a contrary char-
out every thing by dint of
clear head, or a copious
profound genius, or a sure
t character, or peculiar turn
re excellent than another!
can answer none of these
dering which of those qua-
best for the world, and car-
undertaking.

l exalted sense be not so

Digitized by Google

useful as common sense, their rarity, their no
and the nobleness of their objects make some
pensation, and render them the admiration of
kind : as gold, though less serviceable than
acquires, from its scarcity, a value, *which is*
superior.

The defects of judgment can be supplied *b*
art or invention; but those of MEMORY freque
may, both in business and in study, by me
and industry, and by diligence in committing
thing to writing; and we scarcely ever hear a
memory given as a reason for a man's failure i
undertaking. But in ancient times, when no
could make a figure without the talent of *spea*
and when the audience were too delicate to
such crude, undigested harangues as our exte
rary orators offer to public assemblies; *the fa*
of memory was then of the utmost consequ
and was accordingly much more valued th
present. Scarce any great genius is mention
antiquity, who is not celebrated for this talen
Cicero enumerates it among the other sublime
lities of Cæsar himself [1].

Particular customs and manners alter the
fulness of qualities: they also alter their merit.
ticular situations and accidents have, *in some*
gree, the same influence. He will always be
esteemed, who possesses those talents and acc
plishments, which suit his station and profes

[1] *Fuit in illo ingenium, ratio, memoria, litera, cura tatio, diligentia, &c.* PHILIP. 2.

Digitized by Google

s misplaced in the part
n. The private or selfish
more arbitrary than the
ther respects, they are,
ot and controversy.
ontinued ostentation, of
mong men in *active* life
it, and among those in
enevolence; and so many
have been, no doubt,
world are apt, without
over a sullen incredulity
l endowments, and even
eny their existence and
nd that, of old, the per-
and *Cynics* concerning
professions and slender
st in mankind; and Lu-
s with regard to pleasure,
ery moral writer, cannot,
o much boasted, without
leen and irony [1]. But
, whence-ever it arises,
ar as to make us deny
ecies of merit, and all

, καὶ λήρους, μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ
Again, Καὶ συναγόντες (οἱ
μα, τὴν τε πολυβρύλλιον ἀρε-
another place, Ἡ πᾶσα γὰρ ἔστιν
σις, καὶ εἱμαρμένη, καὶ τύχη,
ὧν ὀνόματα; *Decr. Concil.*

distinction of manners and behaviour. Be
cretion, caution, enterprise, industry, assidu
gality, œconomy, good-sense, prudence, disce
beside these endowments, I say, whose very
force an avowal of their merit, there are
others, to which the most determined *sceptic*
cannot, for a moment, refuse the tribute *of prai*
and approbation. *Temperance, sobriety, patience,*
constancy, perseverance, forethought, considerateness,
secrecy, order, insinuation, address, presence of min
quickness of conception, facility of expression—the
and a thousand more of the same kind, no man
ever deny to be excellencies and perfections.
their merit consists in their tendency to serve
person possessed of them, without any *magnificent*
claim to public and social *desert, we are the* les
jealous of their pretensions, and readily *admit* the
into the catalogue of laudable qualities. We a
not sensible that, by this concession, we have pave
the way for all the other moral excellencies, an
cannot consistently hesitate any longer, with regar
to disinterested benevolence, patriotism, and *hu-*
manity.

It seems, indeed, certain, that first appearance
are here, as usual, extremely deceitful, and that it
more difficult, in a speculative way, to resolve int
self-love the merit which we ascribe to the selfi
virtues above mentioned, than that even of the
social virtues, justice and beneficence. For the
latter purpose we need but say, that whatever
conduct promotes the good of the community is
loved, praised, and esteemed by the community, on

Digitized by Google

erest, of which every
affection and regard
lf-love, yet a distinc-
ure, may not readily
oners; and there is
cavil and dispute for
hich tend only to the
out any reference to
et esteemed and va-
n can we account for
or deduce it from that
here a necessity for
and misery of others
ndifferent to us; but
hether in its causes or
ospect of well-culti-
etensions no higher),
d satisfaction; the ap-
a lowering cloud or
elancholy damp over
oncession being once
nd a natural unforced
mena of human life
be, prevail among all

I.

this place, to examine
owments, and of the
timents of regard and
her these phænomena

Digitized by Google

fortify or weaken the present theory. It wi
turally be expected, that the beauty of the
as is supposed by all ancient moralists, wi
similar, in some respects, to that of the n
and that every kind of esteem, which is paic
man, will have something similar *in its o*
whether it arise from his mental *endowmen*
from the situation of his exterior circumstanc

It is evident, that one considerable sourc
beauty in all animals is the advantage which
reap from the particular structure of their limb
members, suitably to the particular manner o
to which they are by nature destined. Th
proportions of a horse, described by Xenopho
Virgil, are the same that are received at *thi*
by our modern jockeys, because the found
of them is the same, namely, experience of
is detrimental or useful to the animal.

Broad shoulders, a lank belly, firm joints,
legs; all these are beautiful in our species, b
signs of force and vigour. Ideas of utility a
contrary, though they do not entirely dete
what is handsome or deformed, are evidentl
source of a considerable part of approbati
dislike.

In ancient times, bodily strength and dex
being of greater *use* and importance *in wa*
also much more esteemed and valued, th
present. Not to insist on Homer and the
we may observe, that historians scruple n
mention *force of body* among the other a
plishments even of Epaminondas, whom

est hero, statesman, and
A like praise is given
atest of the Romans [2].
vhat we observed above

empt, with both sexes,
he unhappy object is
of so capital a pleasure
e, as disabled from com-
Barrenness in women,
ility, is a reproach, but
of which the reason is
the present theory.
nting or statuary more
balancing the figures,
e greatest exactness on
y. A figure, which is
; because it conveys
l, harm, and pain [3].

V. It may not be improper
inondas, as drawn by the
e ideas of perfect merit,
"In other illustrious men,"
it each possessed some one
e foundation of his fame:
are found united; force of
vigour of mind, contempt
ition, and, *what is chiefly*
luct in war."
velocibus cursu, cum validis
Veget.
e to pain and disease and
er health and ease. These

Digitized by Google

A disposition or turn of mind, which qua
a man to rise in the world, and advance his
tune, is entitled to esteem and regard, as ha
ready been explained. It may, therefore, r
rally be supposed, that the actual possessio
riches and authority will have a *considerabl*
fluence over these sentiments.

Let us examine any hypothesis, by *which*
can account for the regard paid to the rich
powerful, we shall find none satisfactory, but
which derives it from the enjoyment comm
cated to the spectator by the images of prosp
happiness, ease, plenty, authority, and the g
cation of every appetite. Self-love, for inst
which some affect so much to consider as the so
of every sentiment, is plainly insufficient for
purpose. Where no good-will or friendship ap

circumstances, as they make no distinction betwee
man and another, are no source of pride or hu
regard or contempt. But comparing our own spe
superior ones, it is a very mortifying consideration
we should all be so liable to diseases and infirmitie
divines accordingly employ this topic, in order to d
self-conceit and vanity. They would have more su
if the common bent of our thoughts were not
tually turned to compare ourselves with others. T
firmities of old age are mortifying, because a co
rison with the young may take place. The king's e
industriously concealed, because it affects others, a
often transmitted to posterity. The case is near
same with such diseases as convey any nausec
frightful images; the epilepsy, for instance, ulcers,
scabs, &c.

Digitized by Google

on what we can found
m the riches of others;
ct the rich, even before
favourable disposition

same sentiments, when
sphere of their activity,
supposed to possess the
prisoner of war, in all
with a regard suited to
, it is evident, go far
ion of any person. If
r a share, this still af-
ır present purpose. For
of birth, but one who
succession of rich and
who acquires our esteem
sons whom we esteem!
though dead, are re-
n account of their riches,
t any kind of expecta-

prisoners of war or the
this disinterested regard
bserve, with a little at-
which occur in common
man, who is himself, we
tent fortune, and of no
d to a company of stran-
with different degrees
rmed of their different
though it is impossible

Digitized by Google

that he can so suddenly propose, and perh
would not accept of, any pecuniary advantag
them. A traveller is always admitted into
pany, and meets with civility, in proporti
his train and equipage speak him a man of gr
moderate fortune. In short, the *different*
of men are, in a great measure, regulated *by ri*
and that with regard to superiors as well as i
riors, strangers as well as acquaintance.

What remains, therefore, but to conclude,
as riches are desired for ourselves only as the n
of gratifying our appetites, either at present
some imaginary future period, they beget e
in others merely from their having that influ
This indeed is their very nature or essence:
have a direct reference to the commodities, co
niencies, and pleasures of life. The bill of a b
who is broken, or gold in a desert island, would
wise be fully as valuable. When we approach a
who is, as we say, at his ease, we are presented
the pleasing ideas of plenty, satisfaction, cleanl
warmth, a chearful house, elegant furniture, r
service, and whatever is desirable in meat, d
or apparel. On the contrary, when a poor
appears, the disagreeable images of want, per
hard labour, dirty furniture, coarse or ragged clo
nauseous meat, and distasteful liquor, *immedia*
strike our fancy. What else do we mean by say
that one is rich, the other poor! and as regard
contempt is the natural consequence of those d
rent situations in life, it is easily seen what
ditional light and evidence this throws on

Digitized by Google

gard to all moral distinc-

himself of all ridiculous
, sincerely, and steadily
e as well as philosophy,
ne makes less difference
rly imagined; such a one
rees of esteem according
aintance. He may, in-
perior deference to the
; because riches are the
e most fixed and deter-
tion : but his internal

raordinary, and seemingly
n of our passions, when we
tion of others. Very often
prosperity produce envy,
f hatred, and arises chiefly
elves with the person. At
ast in very short intervals,
respect, which is a species
th a mixture of humility.
ortunes of our fellow-crea-
has in it a strong mixture
t of pity is nearly allied to
s of dislike, with a mixture
se phænomena, as a subject
urious with regard to moral
r the present purpose to
wer and riches commonly
meanness, contempt, though
nts may sometimes raise the

Google

sentiments are more regulated by the per characters of men, than by the accidental capricious favours of fortune.

In most countries of Europe family, that is reditary riches, marked with titles and symbols the sovereign, is the chief source of distinction. England more regard is paid to present opule and plenty. Each practice has its advantages disadvantages. Where birth is respected, unact spiritless minds remain in haughty indolence, dream of nothing but pedigrees and genealo the generous and ambitious seek honour, and thority, and reputation, and favour. Where ri are the chief idol, corruption, venality, rapine vail: arts, manufactures, commerce, agricul flourish. The former prejudice, being favour to military virtue, is more suited to monarch the latter, being the chief spur to industry, ag better with a republican government: and accordingly find, that each of these forms of vernment, by varying the *utility* of those cust has commonly a proportionable effect on the timents of mankind.

ESSAY XI.

ON QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEABL TO OURSELVES.

WHOEVER has passed an evening with serious lancholy people, and has observed how suddenly conversation was animated, and what sprightli

fused itself over the countenance, discourse, d behaviour of every one, on the accession of a od-humoured, lively companion; such a one will sily allow, that CHEARFULNESS carries great erit with it, and naturally conciliates the good- ill of mankind. No quality, indeed, more readily mmunicates itself to all around, because no one s a greater propensity to display itself in jovial k and pleasant entertainment. The flame spreads rough the whole circle; and the most sullen and prose are often caught by it. That the melan- oly hate the merry, even though Horace says it, have some difficulty to allow; because I have ways observed, that, where the jollity is moderate id decent, serious people are so much the more elighted, as it dissipates the gloom with which ey are commonly oppressed, and gives them an usual enjoyment.

From this influence of chearfulness, both to mmunicate itself and to engage approbation, we ay perceive, that there is another set of mental ualities, which, without any utility or any tendency farther good, either of the community or of the ossessor, diffuse a satisfaction on the beholders, nd procure friendship and regard. Their imme- liate sensation, to the person possessed of them, is greeable. Others enter into the same humour, and atch the sentiment, by a contagion or natural sym- athy; and as we cannot forbear loving whatever leases, a kindly emotion arises towards the person ho communicates so much satisfaction. He is a ore animating spectacle. His presence diffuses

Digitized by Google

over us more serene complacency and enjoy
our imagination, entering into his feelings a
position, is affected in a more agreeable m
than if a melancholy, dejected, sullen, anxiou
per were presented to us. Hence the *affectio*
approbation, which attend the former; *the ave*
and disgust, with which we regard the latter [1].

Few men would envy the character, which C
gives of Cassius:

> ——————He loves not play,
> As thou do'st, Anthony: he hears no music:
> Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
> As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
> That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.

Not only such men, as Cæsar adds, are comm
dangerous, but also, having little enjoyment v
themselves, they can never become agreeal
others, or contribute to social entertainment
all polite nations and ages, a relish for pleas
accompanied with temperance and decency,
teemed a considerable merit, even in the gr

[1] There is no man, who, on particular occasio
not affected with all the disagreeable passions,
anger, dejection, grief, melancholy, anxiety, &c.
these, so far as they are natural and universal, ma
difference between one man and another, and can
be the object of blame. It is only when the dispo
gives a *propensity* to any of these disagreeable pas
that they disfigure the character, and, by giving
siness, convey the sentiment of disapprobation to the
tator.

re requisite in those of
It is an agreeable re-
ch writer gives of the
this particular: *Virtue*
terity; pleasure without
fearing its end [1].
any signal instance of
Dignity of Character!
disdain of slavery, and
pirit, which arises from
ime, says Longinus, is
or image of magnani-
ty appears in any one,
ot uttered, it excites our
as may be observed of
in the Odyssey, which
n and resolute indigna-
convey [2].
armenio, *I would accept*
s. *So would I too,* re-
menio. This saying is
rom a like principle [3].
o his soldiers, when they
he Indies, *go, tell your*
lexander *completing the*
xander," said the prince

rudesse;
s mollesse;
crains point la fin.
SAINT-EVREMOND.

of Condé who always admired this passage, "
" doned by his soldiers, among Barbarians n
" fully subdued, felt in himself such a dignit
" right of empire, that he could not believe i
" sible, that any one would refuse *to obey*
" Whether in Europe or in Asia, *among Gree*
" Persians, all was indifferent to him : *whereve*
" found men, he fancied he should find subje

The confidant of Medea in the tragedy rec mends caution and submission; and enumer all the distresses of that unfortunate heroine her, what she has to support her against her r rous and implacable enemies! *Myself,* replie *myself, I say, and it is enough.* Boileau recommends this passage as an instance o sublime[1].

When Phocion, the modest, the gentle Ph was led to execution, he turned to one of h low-sufferers, who was lamenting his own har *Is it not glory enough for you,* says he, *that y with* Phocion[2]!

Place in opposition the picture, which T draws of Vitellius, fallen from empire, prolo his ignominy from a wretched love of life, del over to the merciless rabble, tossed, buffere kicked about; constrained, by their hol*ding* niard under his chin, to raise his head, and e himself to every contumely. What abject infa What low humiliation! Yet even here, say

[1] Réflexion X sur Longin.
[2] PLUTARCH. in Phoc.

me symptoms of a mind
a tribune, who insulted
our emperor [1].
olute want of spirit and
proper sense of what is
and the common inter-
onstitutes what we pro-
man can submit to the
ain his ends, fawn upon
legrade himself by inti-
h undeserving inferiors.
us pride or self-value is
e of it in the mind dis-
nner as the want of a
ost material features of
body [2].

author entering upon the
dum spectaculum, ducebatur,
crymante : deformitas exitûs
enter thoroughly into this
make allowance for the
ought to prolong his life
; but, as he had always
en became a duty to part

ay often be a vice, and
he instance of ingratitude,
we expect a beauty, the
y sensation, and produces
ess of character, likewise,
in another view. Where
e in himself, we are not
eem of him. And if the

Digitized by Google

The utility of COURAGE, both to the public and to the person possessed of it, is an obvious foundation of merit: but to any one who duly considers the matter, it will appear, *that* this quality has a peculiar lustre, which *it derives* wholly from itself, and from that noble *elevation* inseparable from it. Its figure, drawn by *painters and* by poets, displays, in each feature, a sublim*ity and* daring confidence, which catches the eye, engages the affections, and diffuses, by sympathy, a like sublimity of sentiment over every spectator.

Under what shining colours does Demosthenes[1] represent Philip, where the orator apologizes for his own administration, and justifies that pertinacious love of liberty, with which he had *inspired* the Athenians! "I beheld Philip," says he, "him with whom was your contest, resolutely, while "in pursuit of empire and dominion, exposing "himself to every wound; his eye goared, his neck "wrested, his arm, his thigh pierced; whatever part "of his body fortune should seize on, that cheerfully relinquishing, provided that, with what remained, he might live in honour and renown. "And shall it be said, that he, born in Pella, a "place heretofore mean and ignoble, should be "inspired with so high an ambition *and thirst* of

same person, who crouches to his superiors, *is insolent* to his inferiors (as often happens), this contrariety of behaviour, instead of correcting the former vice, aggravates it extremely by the addition of a vice still more odious.

[1] *Pro corona.*

Digitized by Google

fame, while you, Athenians," &c. These praises excite the most lively admiration; but the views presented by the orator carry us not, we see, beyond the hero himself, nor ever regard the future advantageous consequences of his valour.

The martial temper of the Romans, inflamed by continual wars, had raised their esteem of courage so high, that, in their language, it was called *virtue*, by way of excellence and of distinction from all other moral qualities. *The* Suevi, in the opinion of Tacitus [1], *dressed their hair with a laudable intent; not for the purpose of loving or being loved: they adorned themselves only for their enemies, and in order to appear more terrible.* A sentiment of the historian, which would sound a little oddly in other nations and other ages.

The Scythians, according to Herodotus [2], after scalping their enemies, dressed the skin like leather, and used it as a towel; and whoever had the most of those towels were most esteemed among them. So much had martial bravery, in that nation, as well as in many others, destroyed the sentiments of humanity; a virtue surely much more useful and engaging.

It is indeed observable, that, among all uncultivated nations, who have not, as yet, had full experience of the advantages attending beneficence, justice, and the social virtues, courage is the predominant excellence; what is most celebrated by

[1] *De moribus Germanorum.*
[2] *Lib. IV.*

Digitized by Google

poets, recommended by parents and instructors, and admired by the public in general. The ethics of Homer are, in this particular, very different from those of Fenelon, his elegant *imitator; and* such as were well suited to an age, *when one hero*, as remarked by Thucydides [1], could *ask another*, without offence, whether he were a robber *or not*! Such also, very lately, was the system of ethics, which prevailed in many barbarous parts of Ireland, if we may credit Spenser, in his judicious account of the state of that kingdom [2].

Of the same class of virtues with courage is that undisturbed philosophical TRANQUILLITY, superior to pain, sorrow, anxiety, and each assault of adverse fortune. Conscious of his own virtue, say the philosophers, the sage elevates himself above every accident of life; and securely placed in the temple of wisdom, looks down on inferior mortals, engaged in the pursuit of honours, riches, reputation, and every frivolous enjoyment. These pretensions, no doubt, when stretched to the utmost are by far too magnificent for human nature. They carry, however, a grandeur with them, which seizes

[1] *Lib. 1.*

[2] It is a common use, says he, amongst their gentlemen's sons, that, as soon as they are able to use their weapons, they strait gather to themselves three or four stragglers or kern, with whom wandering a while up and down idly the country, taking only meat, he at last falleth into some bad occasion, that shall be offered; which being once made known, he is thenceforth counted a man of worth, in whom there is courage.

Digitized by Google

him with admiration.
approach in practice to
nd indifference (for we
stupid insensibility), the
ll we attain within our-
tness of mind shall we
e philosophical tranquil-
ered only as a branch of

es; his perpetual serenity
the greatest poverty and
olute contempt of riches,
re of preserving liberty,
nce from his friends and
n the dependence of an
not so much as a door
vel, and therefore soon
furniture which he had
g to disappoint all robbers
its place with an earthen
eably kept possession of

he heros in philosophy,
patriotism, have a gran-
nt, which astonishes our
rejected as extravagant
in their turn, I allow,
eason to consider as ro-
he degree of humanity,
lity, and other social vir-
dministration of govern-
n modern times, had any

Digitized by Google

one been then able to have made a fair repr
tation of them. Such is the compensation, v
nature, or rather education, has made in the c
bution of excellencies and virtues, in those diff
ages.

The merit of BENEVOLENCE, *arising fro*
utility, and its tendency to promote the *goo*
mankind, has been already explained, and is,
doubt, the source of a *considerable* part of
esteem, which is so universally paid to it.
it will also be allowed, that the very softness
tenderness of the sentiment, its engaging en
ments, its fond expressions, its delicate atten
and all that flow of mutual confidence and re
which enters into a warm attachment of lov
friendship; it will be allowed, I say, that these
ings, being delightful in themselves, are nec
rily communicated to the spectators, and melt
into the same fondness and delicacy. The tea
turally starts in our eye on the apprehensio
a warm sentiment of this nature: our l
heaves, our heart is agitated, and every hu
tender principle of our frame is set in motion
gives us the purest and most satisfactory en
ment.

When poets form descriptions of Elysian fi
where the blessed inhabitants stand in *no nee*
each other's assistance, they yet represent ther
maintaining a constant intercourse of love
friendship, and sooth our fancy with the plea
image of these soft and gentle passions. The id
tender tranquillity in a pastoral Arcadia is agre

m a like principle, as has been observed above. Who would live amidst perpetual wrangling, d scolding, and mutual reproaches! the roughness d harshness of these emotions disturb and disease us: we suffer by contagion and sympathy; or can we remain indifferent spectators, even ough certain, that no pernicious consequences ould ever follow from such angry passions.

As a certain proof, that the whole merit of bevolence is not derived from its usefulness, we ay observe, that, in a kind way of blame, we y, a person is *too good,* when he exceeds his part society, and carries his attention for others eyond the proper bounds. In like manner, we y, a man is *too high-spirited, too intrepid, too different about fortune:* reproaches, which really, bottom, imply more esteem than many panrics. Being accustomed to rate the merit and emerit of characters chiefly by their useful or ernicious tendencies, we cannot forbear applying ne epithet of blame, when we discover a sentiment which rises to a degree that is hurtful: but may happen, at the same time, that its noble elevation, or its engaging tenderness, so seizes the eart as rather to increase our friendship and concern for the person [1].

The amours and attachments of Henry the IVth

[1] Cheerfulness could scarce admit of blame from its excess, were it not that dissolute mirth, without a proper cause or subject, is a sure symptom and characteristic of folly, and, on that account, disgustful.

Digitized by Google

of France, during the civil wars of the leagu
quently hurt his interest and his cause; but
young, at least, and amorous, who can symp
with the tender passions, will allow, that thi
weakness (for they will readily call it such) c
endears that hero, and interests them *in his fort*

The excessive bravery and resolute *inflexi*
of Charles the XIIth ruined his own country
infested all his neighbours, but have such splen
and greatness in their appearance as strike us
admiration; and they might, in some degre
even approved of, if they betrayed not some
too evident symptoms of madness and diso

The Athenians pretended to the first inv
of agriculture and of laws, and always valued
selves extremely on the benefit thereby pro
to the whole race of mankind. They also bo
and with reason, of their warlike enterprises
ticularly against those innumerable fleets a
mies of Persians, which invaded Greece duri
reigns of Darius and Xerxes. But though
be no comparison, in point of utility, betwee
peaceful and military honours, yet we find
the orators, who have written such elaborate
gyrics on that famous city, have chiefly triu
in displaying the warlike atchievements. I
Thucydides, Plato, and Isocrates discover,
them, the same partiality, which, though
demned by calm reason and reflection, appea
natural in the mind of man.

It is observable, that the great charm of
consists in lively pictures of the sublime pa

e, disdain of fortune; or those
ns, love and friendship, which
diffuse over it similar senti-
: and though all kinds of pas-
lisagreeable, such as grief and
when excited by poetry, to
from a mechanism of nature,
ned; yet those more elevated
ave a peculiar influence, and
n one cause or principle: not
alone interest us in the for-
represented, or communicate
ion for their character.

y be doubted, that this talent
e the passions, this PATHETIC
timent, is a very considerable
hanced by its extreme rarity,
n possessed of it above every
in which he lives! The pru-
iness, and benign government
d with all the splendour of his
rial crown, render him but an
for fame with Virgil, who lays
osite scale but the divine beau-
nius.

y to these beauties, or a DE-
self a beauty in any character,
est, the most durable, and most
ments.

nstances of the several species
ned for the immediate pleasure
nicate to the person possessed

Digitized by Google

of them. No views of utility or of future h
cial consequences enter into this sentiment
probation; yet is it of a kind similar to that
sentiment, which arises from views of a pul
private utility. The same social sympathy, w
observe, or fellow-feeling with human *happin*
misery, gives rise to both; and this analogy,
the parts of the present theory, may justly b
garded as a confirmation of it.

ESSAY XII.

ON QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEA TO OTHERS[1].

As the mutual shocks in *society*, and the
sitions of interest and self-love, have const
mankind to establish the laws of *justice*, in o
preserve the advantages of mutual assistanc
protection; in like manner, the eternal contra
in *company*, of men's pride and self-conceit
introduced the rules of GOOD-MANNERS o
LITENESS, in order to facilitate the intercou

[1] It is the nature, and, indeed, the definition of
that it is *a quality of the mind agreeable to or approved
every one who considers or contemplates it.* But some
ties produce pleasure, because they are useful to s
or useful or agreeable to the person himself; othe
duce it more immediately, which is the case wi
class of virtues here considered.

Digitized by Google

inds, and an undisturbed commerce and conver-ation. Among well-bred people, a mutual defe-ence is affected; contempt of others disguised; uthority concealed; attention given to each in his urn; and an easy stream of conversation main-ained, without vehemence, without interruption, vithout eagerness for victory, and without any airs f superiority. These attentions and regards are nmediately *agreeable* to others, abstracted from ny consideration of utility or beneficial tenden-ies: they conciliate affection, promote esteem, nd extremely enhance the merit of the person, who egulates his behaviour by them.

Many of the forms of breeding are arbitrary and asual; but the thing expressed by them is still the ame. A Spaniard goes out of his own house before is guest to signify that he leaves him master of ll. In other countries the landlord walks out ast, as a common mark of deference and regard.

But, in order to render a man perfect *good com-pany*, he must have WIT and INGENUITY as well s good-manners. What wit is, it may not be easy o define; but it is easy surely to determine, that it s a quality immediately *agreeable* to others, and ommunicating, on its first appearance, a lively joy nd satisfaction to every one who has any compre-ension of it. The most profound metaphysics, ndeed, might be employed in explaining the va-ious kinds and species of wit; and many classes of , which are now received on the sole testimony f taste and sentiment, might, perhaps, be resolved nto more general principles. But this is sufficient

Digitized by Google

for our present purpose, that it does affect taste sentiment, and, bestowing an immediate enjoy is a sure source of approbation and affection.

In countries where men pass most of their in conversation, and visits, and assemblies, *companionable* qualities, so to speak, are of estimation, and form a chief part of personal m In countries where men live a more domestic and either are employed in business, or amuse th selves in a narrower circle of acquaintance, more solid qualities are chiefly regarded. Th have often observed, that, among the French first questions, with regard to a stranger, are, *polite! has he wit!* In our own country, the praise bestowed is always that of a *good-nat sensible fellow.*

In conversation, the lively spirit of dialog *agreeable,* even to those who desire not to any share in the discourse: hence the teller of stories, or the pompous declaimer, is very littl proved of. But most men desire likewise turn in the conversation, and regard, with a evil eye, that *loquacity,* which deprives them right they are naturally so jealous of.

There is a sort of harmless *liars,* frequently t met with in company, who deal much in *the* vellous. Their usual intention is to *please* entertain; but as men are most delighted with w they conceive to be truth, these people mist extremely the means of pleasing, and incur versal blame. Some indulgence, however, to l or fiction is given in *humorous* stories, because

Digitized by Google

ere really agreeable and entertaining; and truth not of any importance.

Eloquence, genius of all kinds, even good sense, id sound reasoning, when it rises to an eminent egree, and is employed upon subjects of any conderable dignity and nice discernment; all these ndowments seem immediately agreeable, and have *merit* distinct from their usefulness. Rarity, likeise, which so much enhances the price of every ing, must set an additional value on these noble lents of the human mind.

Modesty may be understood in different senses, ven abstracted from chastity, which has been aleady treated of. It sometimes means that tenerness and nicety of honour, that apprehension of lame, that dread of intrusion or injury towards thers, that pudor, which is the proper guardian of very kind of virtue, and a sure preservative against ice and corruption. But its most usual meaning when it is opposed to *impudence* and *arrogance*, nd expresses a diffidence of our own judgment and due attention and regard for others. In young en chiefly, this quality is a sure sign of good nse; and is also the certain means of augmenting at endowment, by preserving their ears open to struction, and making them still grasp after new tainments. But it has a farther charm to every ectator, by flattering every man's vanity, and prenting the appearance of a docile pupil, who reives, with proper attention and respect, every ord they utter.

Men have, in general, a much greater propensity

Digitized by Google

to over-value than to under-value themselves,
withstanding the opinion of Aristotle [1].
makes us more jealous of the excess on the fo
side, and causes us to regard, with a peculiar i
gence, all tendency to modesty and self-diffid
as esteeming the danger less of fall*ing into*
vicious extreme of that nature. It *is thus*
countries where men's bodies are apt to exceed
corpulency, personal beauty is placed in a m
greater degree of slenderness, than in cou
where that is the most usual defect. Being so
struck with instances of one species of defor
men think they can never keep at too great a
tance from it, and wish always to have a leani
the opposite side. In like manner, were the
opened to self-praise, and were Montaigne's m
observed, that one should say as frankly, *I*
sense, I have learning, I have courage, beauty, o
as it is sure we often think so; were this the
I say, every one is sensible, that such a flo
impertinence would break in upon us, as w
render society wholly intolerable. For this r
custom has established it as a rule, in commo
cieties, that men should not indulge themselv
self-praise, or even speak much of themselves
it is only among intimate friends, or people o
manly behaviour, that one is allowed to *do hi*
justice. No body finds fault with Maurice, P
of Orange, for his reply to one, who asked
whom he esteemed the first general of the age

[1] Ethic. *ad Nicomachum.*

Digitized by Google

Marquis of Spinola, said he, *is the second*; though is observable, that the self-praise implied is here etter implied, than if it had been directly expressed, ithout any cover or disguise.

He must be a very superficial thinker, who imaines, that all instances of mutual deference are o be understood in earnest, and that a man would e more estimable for being ignorant of his own erits and accomplishments. A small bias towards odesty, even in the internal sentiment, is favouubly regarded, especially in young people; and a rong bias is required in the outward behaviour: ut this excludes not a noble pride and spirit, which ay openly display itself in its full extent, when ne lies under calumny or oppression of any kind. he generous contumacy of Socrates, as Cicero alls it, has been highly celebrated in all ages; and, hen joined to the usual modesty of his behaviour, orms a shining character. Iphicrates, the Atheian, being accused of betraying the interests of is country, asked his accuser: *Would you*, says e, *have, on a like occasion, been guilty of that crime?* *By no means*, replied the other. *And can you then magine*, cried the hero, *that* Iphicrates *would be uilty*[1]*?* In short, a generous spirit and self-value, ell founded, decently disguised, and courageously upported under distress and calumny, is a great xcellency, and seems to derive its merits from he noble elevation of its sentiment, or its immeiate agreeableness to its possessor. In ordinary

[1] QUINCTIL. *lib. V, cap. 12.*

characters, we approve of a bias towards mo
which is a quality immediately agreeable to c
the vicious excess of the former virtue, name
solence or haughtiness, is immediately disagr
to others: the excess of the latter is so to th
sessor. Thus are the boundaries of *these*
adjusted.

A desire of fame, reputation, or a character
others, is so far from being blameable, that it s
inseparable from virtue, genius, capacity, a
generous or noble disposition. An attention
to trivial matters, in order to please, is also exp
and demanded by society; and no one is surp
if he find a man in company, to observe a g
elegance of dress and more pleasant flow of
versation, than when he passes his time at
and with his own family. Wherein then co
VANITY, which is so justly regarded as a fa
imperfection! It seems to consist chiefly in
an intemperate display of our advantages, ho
and accomplishments; in such an importunat
open demand of praise and admiration, as is
sive to others, and encroaches too far on *their*
vanity and ambition. It is besides a sure sym
of the want of true dignity and elevation of
which is so great an ornament in any char
For why that impatient desire of applause, *as i*
were not justly entitled to it, and might not
sonably expect that it would for ever attend
Why so anxious to inform us of the great com
which you have kept; the obliging things
were said to you; the honours, the distin

Digitized by Google

hich you met with; as if these were not things of ›urse, and what we could readily, of ourselves, ave imagined, without being told of them!

DECENCY, or a proper regard to age, sex, cha-acter, and station in the world, may be ranked mong the qualities which are immediately agree-ble to others, and which, by that means, acquire ›raise and approbation. An effeminate behaviour n a man, a rough manner in a woman; these are gly because unsuitable to each character, and ifferent from the qualities which we expect in he sexes. It is as if a tragedy abounded in comic ›eauties, or a comedy in tragic. The disproportions hurt the eye, and convey a disagreeable sentiment to the spectators, the source of blame and disapprobation. This is that *indecorum* which s explained so much at large by Cicero in his ›ffices.

Among the other virtues we may also give CLEANLINESS a place, since it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is no inconsiderable source of love and affection. No one will deny, that a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation which it excites in others, we may, in this instance, seemingly so trivial, clearly discover the origin of moral distinctions, about which the learned have involved themselves in such mazes of perplexity and error.

But besides all the *agreeable* qualities, the origin of whose beauty we can in some degree explain and

Digitized by Google

account for, there still remains something mysterious and inexplicable, which conveys an immediate satisfaction to the spectator, but how, or why, or for what reason, he cannot pretend to determine. There is a MANNER, a grace, an ease, a genteelness, an I know not what, which some men possess above others, which *is very* different from external beauty and comeliness, *and* which, however, catches our affection almost as suddenly and powerfully. And though this *manner* be chiefly talked of in the passion between the sexes, where the concealed magic is easily explained, yet surely much of it prevails in all our estimation of characters, and forms no inconsiderable part of personal merit. This class of accomplishments, therefore, must be trusted entirely to the blind, but sure testimony of taste and sentiment; and must be considered as a part of ethics, left by nature to baffle all the pride of philosophy, and make her sensible of her narrow boundaries and slender acquisitions.

We approve of another, because of his wit, politeness, modesty, decency, or any agreeable *quality* which he possesses, although he be not of our acquaintance, nor has ever given us any entertainment, by means of these accomplishments. The idea which we form of their effect *on his* acquaintance, has an agreeable influence on our imagination, and gives us the sentiment of approbation. This principle enters into all the judgments, which we form concerning manners and characters.

Digitized by Google

ESSAY XIII.

ON THE REASON OF ANIMALS.

ALL our reasonings concerning matter of fact are ›unded on a species of analogy, which leads us › expect from any cause the same events, which ·e have observed to result from similar causes. Vhere the causes are entirely similar, the analogy ; perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is re-arded as certain and conclusive : nor does any nan ever entertain a doubt, where he sees a piece ›f iron, that it will have weight and cohesion of ›arts as in all other instances, which have ever allen under his observation. But where the objects ıave not so exact a similarity, the analogy is less ›erfect, and the inference is less conclusive; though ;till it has some force, in proportion to the degree of similarity and resemblance. The anatomical observations, formed upon one animal, are, by this species of reasoning, extended to all animals; and it is certain, that when the circulation of the blood, for instance, is clearly proved to have place in one creature, as a frog, or fish, it forms a strong presumption, that the same principle has place in all. These analogical observations may be carried farther, even to this science, of which we are now treating; and any theory, by which we explain the operations of the understanding, or the origin and connexion of the passions in man, will acquire additional authority, if we find, that the same theory

Digitized by Google

is requisite to explain the same phænomena in all other animals. We shall make trial of this, with regard to the hypothesis, by which we have, in the foregoing discourse, endeavoured to account for all experimental reasonings; and it is hoped, that this new point of view will serve *to confirm* all our former observations.

First: It seems evident, that animals, *as well as* men, learn many things from experience, and infer, that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, &c. and of the effects, which result from their operation. The ignorance and inexperience of the young are here plainly distinguishable from the cunning and sagacity of the old, who have learned, by long observation, to avoid what hurt them, and to pursue what gave ease or pleasure. A horse, that has been accustomed to the field, becomes acquainted with the proper height which he can leap, and *will* never attempt what exceeds his force and ability. An old greyhound will trust the more fatiguing part of the chace to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; *nor* are the conjectures which he forms on this occasion, founded in any thing but his observation and experience.

This is still more evident from the effects of discipline and education on animals, who, by the

Digitized by Google

of rewards and punishments,
course of action, the most
atural instincts and propen-
erience, which renders a dog
in, when you menace him,
to beat him! Is it not even
makes him answer to his
om such an arbitrary sound,
rather than any of his fellows,
him, when you pronounce it
, and with a certain tone and

we may observe, that the animal
ond what immediately strikes
t this inference is altogether
erience, while the creature ex-
t object the same consequences,
found in its observation to re-
jects.
possible, that this inference of
ounded on any process of ar-
g, by which he concludes, that
low like objects, and that the
always be regular in its ope-
e be in reality any arguments
surely lie too abstruse for the
mperfect understandings; since
the utmost care and attention
nius to discover and observe
erefore, are not guided in these
ing: neither are children: nei-
ty of mankind in their ordinary

Digitized by Google

actions and conclusions: neither are philo
themselves, who, in all the active parts of l
in the main, the same with the vulgar, a
governed by the same maxims. Nature mu
provided some other principle of more rea
more general use and application; *nor can a*
ration of such immense consequence in *life,*
of inferring effects from causes, be trusted
uncertain process of reasoning and argumen
Were this doubtful with regard to men, *it*
to admit of no question with regard to the
creation; and the conclusion being once
established in the one, we have a stron
sumption, from all the rules of analogy,
ought to be universally admitted, witho
exception or reserve. It is custom alone,
engages animals, from every object that
their senses, to infer its usual attendant, a
ries their imagination, from the appearance
one, to conceive the other, in that pa
manner, which we denominate *belief.* No
explication can be given of this operati
all the higher as well as lower classes of
tive beings, which fall under our notice and
vation [r].

[r] Since all reasonings concerning facts or ca
derived merely from custom, it may be asked
happens, that men so much surpass animals in rea
and one man so much surpasses another. Has
same custom the same influence on all!

We shall here endeavour briefly to explain t
difference in human understandings: after wh

But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it, which they derive from the original hand of nature; which much exceed the share of capacity

reason of the difference between men and animals will easily be comprehended.

1. When we have lived any time, and have been accustomed to the uniformity of nature, we acquire a general habit, by which we always transfer the known to the unknown, and conceive the latter to resemble the former. By means of this general habitual principle, we regard even one experiment as the foundation of reasoning, and expect a similar event with some degree of certainty, where the experiment has been made accurately, and free from all foreign circumstances. It is therefore considered as a matter of great importance to observe the consequences of things; and as one man may very much surpass another in attention and memory and observation, this will make a very great difference in their reasoning.

2. Where there is a complication of causes to produce any effect, one mind may be much larger than another, and better able to comprehend the whole system of objects, and to infer justly their consequences.

3. One man is able to carry a chain of consequences to a greater length than another.

4. Few men can think long without running into a confusion of ideas, and mistaking one for another; and there are various degrees of this infirmity.

5. The circumstance, on which the effect depends, is frequently involved in other circumstances, which are foreign and extrinsic. The separation of it often requires great attention, accuracy and subtlety.

6. The forming of general maxims from particular observation is a very nice operation, and nothing is more

Digitized by Google

they possess on ordinary occasions; and in w
they improve little or nothing by the lon
practice and experience. These we denomi
Instincts, and are so apt to admire, as someth
very extraordinary, and inexplicable by all the
quisitions of human understanding. But our wo
will, perhaps, cease or diminish when we consi
that the experimental reasoning itself, which
possess in common with beasts, and on which
whole conduct of life depends, is nothing bu
species of instinct or mechanical power, that
in us unknown to ourselves, and, in its chief op
tions, is not directed by any such relations or c
parison of ideas as are the proper objects of ou
tellectual faculties. Though the instinct be d
rent, yet still it is an instinct, which teaches a
to avoid the fire, as much as that, which tea
a bird, with such exactness, the art of incuba
and the whole œconomy and order of its nur

usual, from haste or a narrowness of mind, which see
on all sides, than to commit mistakes in this particul

7. When we reason from analogies, the man who
the greater experience or the greater promptitud
suggesting analogies, will be the better reasoner.

8. Biasses from prejudice, education, passion, party,
hang more upon one mind than another.

9. After we have acquired a confidence in hu
testimony, books and conversation enlarge much
the sphere of one man's experience and thought
those of another.

It would be easy to discover many other circumsta
that make a difference in the understandings of men.

Digitized by Google

ESSAY XIV.

AN, OR THE MAN OF ELEGANCE AND PLEASURE.

rtification to the vanity of man, that and industry can never equal the ure's productions, either for beauty is only the under-workman, and is ve a few strokes of embellishment to hich come from the hand of the of the drapery may be of his draw- not allowed to touch the principal y make a suit of clothes; but nature man.

se productions, commonly denomi- art, we find that the noblest of the len for their chief beauty to the force uence of nature. To the native en- poets we owe whatever is admirable ctions. The greatest genius, where ime fails him (for she is not equal), e lyre, and hopes not, from the rules n that divine harmony, which must her inspiration alone. How poor s, where a happy flow of fancy has materials for art to embellish and

e fruitless attempts of art, no one is s that which the severe philosophers en, the producing of an *artificial*

Digitized by Google

happiness, and making us be pleased by rules o reason, and by reflection. Why did none of the claim the reward which Xerxes promised to him, wh should invent a new pleasure! Unless, perhaps, the invented so many pleasures for their own use, tha they despised riches, and stood in no need of an enjoyments, which the rewards of that monarc could procure them. I am apt, indeed, to think that they were not willing to furnish the Persia court with a new pleasure, by presenting it with s new and unusual an object of ridicule. Their sp culations, when confined to theory, and gravel delivered in the schools of Greece, might exci admiration in their ignorant pupils: but the a tempting to reduce such principles to practice wou soon have betrayed their absurdity.

You pretend to make me happy by reason, an by rules of art. You must, then, create me ane by rules of art; for on my original frame an structure does my happiness depend. But you wa power to effect this; and skill too, I am afraid: n can I entertain a less opinion of nature's wisdo than of your's. And let her conduct the machin which she has so wisely framed. I find, that I shou only spoil it by my tampering.

To what purpose should I pretend to regula refine, or invigorate any of those springs or pri ciples, which nature has implanted in me! Is th the road by which I must reach happiness! B happiness implies ease, contentment, repose, a pleasure; not watchfulness, care, and fatigue. T health of my body consists in the facility w

Digitized by Google

which all its operations are performed. The stomach digests the aliments: the heart circulates the blood: the brain separates and refines the spirits: and all this without my concerning myself in the matter. When by my will alone I can stop the blood, as it runs with impetuosity along its canals, then may I hope to change the course of my sentiments and passions. In vain should I strain my faculties, and endeavour to receive pleasure from an object which is not fitted by nature to affect my organs with delight. I may give myself pain by my fruitless endeavours, but shall never reach any pleasure.

Away then with all those vain pretences of making ourselves happy within ourselves, of feasting on our own thoughts, of being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and of despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects. This is the voice of Pride, not of Nature. And it were well, if even this pride could support itself, and communicate a real *inward* pleasure, however melancholy or severe. But this impotent pride can do no more than regulate the *outside;* and with infinite pains and attention compose the language and countenance to a philosophical dignity, in order to deceive the ignorant vulgar. The heart, mean while, is empty of all enjoyment: and the mind, unsupported by its proper objects, sinks into the deepest sorrow and dejection. Miserable, but vain mortal! Thy mind be happy within itself! With what resources is it endowed to fill so immense a void, and supply the place of all thy bodily senses

Digitized by Google

and faculties! Can thy head subsist without thy other members! In such a situation,

> What foolish figure must it make!
> Do nothing else but *sleep* and *ake*.

Into such a lethargy, or such a melancholy, mus thy mind be plunged, when deprived of forcing occupations and enjoyments.

Keep me, therefore, no longer in this violent constraint. Confine me not within myself; but point out to me those objects and pleasures, which afford the chief enjoyment. But why do I apply to you proud and ignorant sages, to show me the road to happiness! Let me consult my own passions and inclinations. In them must I read the dictates of nature; not in your frivolous discourses.

But see, propitious to my wishes, the divine, the amiable Pleasure[1], the supreme love of GODS and men, advances towards me! At her approach, my heart beats with genial heat, and every sense and every faculty is dissolved in joy; while she pours around me all the embellishments of the spring, and all the treasures of the autumn. The melody of her voice charms my ears with the softest music, and she invites me to partake of those delicious fruits which, with a smile that diffuses a glory on the heavens and the earth, she presents to me. The sportive Cupids, who attend her, or fan me with their odoriferous wings, or pour on my head the most fragrant oils, or offer me their sparkling nectar in golden goblets. Oh! for ever let me spread my

[1] *Dia Voluptas.*

Digitized by Google

, and thus, thus feel the
soft and downy steps,
nance! Whither do you
lent wishes, and that load
you labour, rather hasten
ing pace! Suffer me to
all my fatigues in search
e to satiate myself with
pains of so long and so

The roses have lost their
and that delicious wine,
xicated all my senses with
in vain the sated palate.
nguor. She beckons her
her assistance. The gay,
the call, and brings along
ovial friends. Welcome,
dear companions, to these
is luxurious repast! Your
he rose its hue, and to the
vapours of this sprightly
ound my heart; while you
d discover in your cheerful
ch you receive from my
n. The like do I receive
ged by your joyous pre-
he feast, with which, from
ny senses were well nigh
pt not pace with the body,
o'er-burdened partner.
ourses, better than in the

Digitized by Google

formal reasoning of the schools, is true wisdom t
be found. In our friendly endearments, better tha
in the hollow debates of statesmen and pretende
patriots, does true virtue display itself. Forgetf
of the past, secure of the future, let us here enjo
the present; and while we yet possess a being, let
fix some good beyond the power of fate or fortun
To-morrow will bring its own pleasures along wi
it: or should it disappoint our fond wishes, we sha
at least enjoy the pleasure of reflecting on the ple
sures of to-day.

Fear not, my friends, that the barbarous disso
nance of Bacchus, and of his revellers, should bre
in upon this entertainment, and confound us wi
their turbulent and clamorous pleasures. T
sprightly muses wait around; and with their char
ing symphony, sufficient to soften the wolves a
tigers of the savage desert, inspire a soft joy in
every bosom. Peace, harmony, and concord, rei
in this retreat; nor is the silence ever broken but
the music of our songs, or the cheerful accents
our friendly voices.

But hark! the favourite of the muses, the gen
Damon strikes the lyre; and while he accompan
its harmonious notes with his more harmonic
song, he inspires us with the same happy debau
of fancy, by which he is himself transported. "
"happy youths!" he sings "Ye favoured of heaven

[1] An imitation of the Sirens song in Tasso:

O Giovinetti, mentre Aprile e Maggio
V' ammantan di fiorite e verdi spoglie, &c.
Gerusalemme liberata, Canto 14.

Digitized by Google

" while the wanton spring pours upon you all her " blooming honours, let not *glory* seduce you with " her delusive blaze, to pass in perils and dangers " this delicious season, this prime of life. Wisdom " points out to you the road to pleasure: Nature " too beekons you to follow her in that smooth and " flowery path. Will you shut your ears to their " commanding voice! Will you harden your heart " to their soft allurements! Oh, deluded mortals! " thus to lose your youth, thus to throw away so " invaluable a present, to trifle with so perishing a " blessing! Contemplate well your recompense. " Consider that glory, which so allures your proud " hearts, and seduces you with your own praises. It " is an echo, a dream, nay, the shadow of a dream, " dissipated by every wind, and lost by every con- " trary breath of the ignorant and ill-judging mul- " titude. You fear not that even death itself shall " ravish it from you. But behold! while you are " yet alive, calumny bereaves you of it; ignorance " neglects it; nature enjoys it not; fancy alone, " renouncing every pleasure, receives this airy re- " compense, empty and unstable as herself."

Thus the hours pass unperceived along, and lead in their wanton train all the pleasures of sense, and all the joys of harmony and friendship. Smiling *innocence* closes the procession; and while she presents herself to our ravished eyes, she embellishes the whole scene, and renders the view of these pleasures as transporting, after they have past us, as when, with laughing countenances, they were yet advancing towards us.

Digitized by Google

But the sun has sunk below the horizon; and darkness, stealing silently upon us, has now buried all nature in an universal shade. "Rejoice, my "friends, continue your repast, or change it for "soft repose. Though absent, your joy or your "tranquillity shall still be mine." *But whither do you go? Or what new pleasures call you from our society? Is there aught agreeable without your friends? And can aught please in which we partake not?*

"Yes, my friends; the joy which I now seek "admits not of your participation. Here alone I "wish your absence: and here alone can I find a "sufficient compensation for the loss of your "society."

But I have not advanced far through the shade of the thick wood, which spreads a double night around me, ere, methinks, I perceive through the gloom the charming Cælia, the mistress of my wishes, who wanders impatient through the grove, and, preventing the appointed hour, silently chides my tardy steps. But the joy, which she receives from my presence, best pleads my excuse; and dissipating every anxious and every angry thought leaves room for nought but mutual joy and rapture. With what words, my fair one! shall I express my tenderness, or describe the emotions which now warm my transported bosom! Words are too faint to describe my love; and if, alas! you feel not the same flame within you, in vain shall I endeavour to convey to you a just conception of it. But your every word and every motion suffice to remove the doubt; and, while they express your passion, serve

Digitized by Google

also to inflame mine. How amiable this solitude, this silence, this darkness! No objects now importune the ravished soul. The thought, the sense, all full of nothing but our mutual happiness, wholly possess the mind, and convey a pleasure, which deluded mortals vainly seek for in every other enjoyment—

But why does your bosom heave with these sighs while tears bathe your glowing cheeks? Why distract your heart with such vain anxieties! Why so often ask me, *How long my love shall yet endure?* Alas! my Cælia, can I resolve this question! *Do I know how long my life shall yet endure?* But does this also disturb your tender breast! And is the image of our frail mortality, for ever present with you, to throw a damp on your gayest hours, and poison even those joys which love inspires! Consider rather, that if life be frail, if youth be transitory, we should well employ the present moment, and lose no part of so perishable an existence. Yet a little moment, and *these* shall be no more. We shall be, as if we had never been. Not a memory of us be left upon earth; and even the fabulous shades below will not afford us an habitation. Our fruitless anxieties, our vain projects, our uncertain speculations, shall all be swallowed up and lost. Our present doubts, concerning the original cause of all things, must never, alas! be resolved. This alone we may be certain of, that if any governing mind preside, he must be pleased to see us fulfil the ends of our being, and enjoy that pleasure, for which alone we were created. Let this reflection give ease to your

Digitized by Google

anxious thoughts; but render not your j
serious by dwelling for ever upon it. It
cient once to be acquainted with this phil
in order to give an unbounded loose to lo
jollity, and remove all the scruples of a va
perstition: but while youth and passion, n
one! prompt our eager desires, we must find
subjects of discourse to intermix with these
rous caresses.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google